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Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-96-063 *1 April 1996*

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Inter-Arab Affairs

Inter-Arab Affairs: Arab League Calls Emergency Session on Israeli Reactor Leak

NC3003153596 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1518 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 30 Mar (MENA)—The Arab League Council will hold an emergency meeting early next week on the level of permanent representatives to discuss the nuclear leak from Israel's Dimona reactor and to formulate a united Arab stance on this issue.

Muhammad Subayh, Palestinian permanent delegate to the Arab League, said the Arab League Secretariat General has gotten agreement from most member states to hold this emergency meeting.

On Thursday [28 March] Palestine submitted a memorandum to the Arab League demanding such a meeting be called.

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat To Wait for 'Final Decision' on Christopher's Plan

JN2903133196 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1300 GMT 29 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Commenting on the urgent assistance plan for the Palestinians proposed by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher at the Sharm al-Shaykh summit follow-up committee meeting, President 'Arafat said: We should wait until a final decision on this plan is made.

During the committee's first session in Washington last night, the U.S. secretary of state proposed an urgent plan to extend international assistance to alleviate the military and economic siege imposed on Palestine by Israeli forces.

Palestinian Affairs: Representatives Meeting With Israel on Charter Changes

TA3103183296 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 31 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Yasir 'Arafat's representatives are holding contacts with the Israeli Government concerning the changes to be introduced into the Palestinian Charter. Our Arab affairs correspondent Ehud Ya'ari says that 'Arafat has formed a preparatory committee for working out the changes in the Charter. Apparently he prefers adopting a new charter. One of the possibilities raised is canceling the Charter by the end of April and adopting a decision to create a new charter at a later date. 'Arafat, however, has still not decided on this issue.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Praises Follow-Up Committee's 'Positive Steps'

JN3003202896 Gaza Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 30 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] President Yasir 'Arafat today received World Bank president James Wolfensohn. President 'Arafat briefed Wolfensohn on the negative effects of the Israeli military closure on Palestine and the Palestinian people's difficult circumstances as a result of this closure. [passage omitted]

President 'Arafat praised the World Bank's efforts to carry out its duties toward the Palestinian National Authority. 'Arafat described the resolutions that were adopted in the Sharm al-Shaykh follow-up committee meeting, which was held in Washington recently, as positive steps. The president praised the stands taken by the Arab and European delegations and the stand of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher in support of the National Authority's position. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs: 'Urayqat on Outcome of Washington Follow-Up Meeting

JN3003202496 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1154 GMT 30 Mar 96

[Telephone interview with Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat, head of the Palestinian delegation to the follow-up meeting held in Washington, by Voice of Palestine correspondent Daniella Karim Khalif on 30 March; place not given; from the "Today's Events" program—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Khalaf] The meetings of the follow-up committee that stemmed from the Peacemakers Conference were concluded in Washington at dawn today. What are the most important results of the meetings? Did they meet the Palestinian demands?

['Urayqat] As a matter of fact, it is premature to make hasty judgments. The nature of the conference determines its results. As you are well aware, the meetings held in Washington were aimed at following up on the recommendations made by the Sharm al-Shaykh summit. We received an invitation from the U.S. side to attend the follow-up meetings. The agenda included one topic, as you must be well aware. But His Excellency President Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] made enormous efforts on the Arab and international scenes. These efforts ensured the support of the Arab states, the EU,

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Japan, Canada, and all participating countries for the Palestinian paper. It is rare for the U.S. State Department to amend its papers or draft agendas. Nonetheless, this time, the U.S. draft agenda was changed. Thus, the conference addressed issues related to the peace process, as well as the fight against terrorism. The change in the draft agenda lent it a measure of balance. This agenda took into account the resolutions and recommendations of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit. The Washington meetings, as you must be well aware, are preparatory in nature. The participants in these meetings will submit recommendations to the leaderships of the 29 countries that attended the deliberations. We managed to achieve three goals. We drew the world's attention to what is taking place in the Palestinian territories, in the territories under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian National Authority, particularly with regard to the collective punishment measures carried out by the Israeli Government in the course of the war being waged against the Palestinian people and the Palestinian National Authority. This punishment has taken the form of closures, suffocation tactics, house demolitions, the reoccupation of rural areas, the closure of educational institutions, and the threat of deportations. The Palestinians raised the question of whether or not Israel is above the law. They also raised the question of whether or not there is a peace agreement to speak of, particularly since the Israeli troops should have by now redeployed in Hebron. We also raised the issue pertaining to the urgent needs of the Palestinian people. All these will be included in the final recommendations that will be submitted to leaders.

We hoped that the conferees would recommend an immediate halt to the arbitrary Israeli measures, which are a form of collective punishment, and that there should be no repeat of such measures if the peace process is to be continued. However, there were no recommendations to this effect. The recommendations endorsed stated that the collective punishment measures, which are detrimental to the peace process, will be referred to leaders for examination and to identify ways to handle them. This would allow us to know whether or not there is a peace agreement to speak of.

[Khalif] What do you have to say on the urgent plan proposed by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher to improve economic conditions in the Palestinian territories?

['Urayqat] The question the Palestinians put to the conferees today was the following: Do you implicitly support the measures Israel has taken, particularly with regard to collective punishment? The premise that this gathering should adopt measures to mitigate the impact of the measures taken by Israel could implicitly mean that the world community approves of the Israeli measures. We raised this question today. We asked the following question: Do you approve of Israel pursuing these collective punishment measures in an open war against 2 million Palestinians? These measures are in violation of the interim agreement signed between the Israelis and Palestinians, not to mention the fact that they are also in violation of all charters and norms and all international conventions. The premise that the world community seeks to mitigate the impact of the Israeli collective punishment and the Israeli siege imposed on the Palestinian territories could implicitly mean that it approves of the Israeli measures. We put this question to the representatives of the participating 29 countries. We asked for a yes or no answer. If they agree to seeing Israel acting as if it were a state above the law, this would mean that the new world order upholds the law of the jungle, and that there would be nothing to speak of at any international forum. Meanwhile, the United Nations and all world states speak of values, charters, and international norms. The answer was clear. The entire world community is opposed to collective punishment, and to all Israeli measures, which they identified as collective punishment measures. A recommendation to this effect will be submitted to leaders. With regard to aid, we wanted to see immediate and urgent aid extended to us. Moreover, we sought international supervision of the crossing between Israel and the Gaza Strip.

Palestinian Affairs: Envoy Views 'Positive' Results of Washington Meeting

NC3003090396 Cairo Voice of the Arabs in Arabic 0610 GMT 30 Mar 96

[Telephone interview with Hasan 'Abd-al-Rahman, Palestinian Ambassador to the United States, in Washington, by 'Adil 'Abd-al-Tawwab in Cairo; date not given; from the "Dialogue From Afar" Program — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] ['Abd-al-Tawwab] Welcome to this program, Mr. Ambassador.

['Abd-al-Rahman] Thank you.

['Abd-al-Tawwab] The follow-up committee ended its meetings in Washington yesterday, Friday [29 March]. What were the results?

['Abd-al-Rahman] A number of committees discussed two main issues: supporting the peace process and coordinating efforts to combat terrorism. In the first committee, drawn from chief delegates, every participating delegation offered the views of his state or government on how to support the peace process. There was emphasis on the need to respect agreements between the Palestinians and the Israelis. Most delegates also reviewed the

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grave results of Israel's measures against Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. There was an Arab and international unanimity on this, and that included the United States, which said the suffering of the Palestinians dictates that this meeting take practical and effective measures to support the Palestinian people. With regard to the other working groups, they discussed coordination to combat terrorism. People who specialize in this field from the security services of the participating countries were involved. We believe that the results of the follow-up committee meetings were positive. [passage omitted]

['Abd-al-Tawwab] Did the countries that attend the meetings respond favorably to the Palestinian demands?

['Abd-al-Rahman] Let me say that there was international unanimity on this, without exception — Israel did not comment, but it did not oppose either. As usual, Egypt, in fact, played an effective and pioneering role in this regard.

['Abd-al-Tawwab] How would you describe the atmosphere of the meetings?

['Abd-al-Rahman] I can say it was a mixture of support for the Palestinians, seriousness in addressing the issue of terrorism, and eagerness to continue the peace process. [passage omitted]

['Abd-al-Tawwab] Mr. Ambassador, there were fears that the meetings would be one-sided, dealing only with the issue of terrorism. Can we say now that the meetings were comprehensive?

['Abd-al-Rahman] We can say this is true. At the beginning, there was an inclination to get the meeting to address one issue: coordination against terrorism, but tremendous efforts [to change this] were made. Egypt played a basic role, and so did the Palestinian delegation with support for the other Arab countries. We should also note the effective European role in this respect. In the face of this unanimity, the host country, the United States, was compelled to change what was intended for the meeting. The meeting became either more balanced or less biased. It referred to and focused on the suffering of the Palestinian people and the peace process.

['Abd-al-Tawwab] Thank you Ambassador Hasan 'Abd-al-Rahman.

['Abd-al-Rahman] You are welcome.

Palestinian Affairs: UK, Spain Pledge Support for 'Arafat, Peace Process

JN2903203596 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1800 GMT 29 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat received a thank-you letter from Spanish Deputy Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez in response to a letter from his excellency regarding his participation in the Sharm al-Shaykh summit. In the letter, Gonzalez expresses his country's support for the peace process, noting that the Israeli siege on Palestine does not serve peace.

The president also received a letter from British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind in which he asserts that Britain will support the Palestinian people through every possible means.

Palestinian Affairs: Cabinet Calls For Emergency UN Security Council Session

JN3003130196 Gaza Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation Television Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 30 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat presided over the weekly session of the Council of Ministers today. The council discussed the latest developments in the peace process in light of the failure of the Israeli occupation forces to withdraw from the city of Hebron by the deadline. The council also discussed the negative repercussions that have resulted from the continued Israeli military siege of Palestine and ways to face these repercussions.

President 'Arafat briefed the council on the results of his recent visit to the United Arab Emirates and the meetings of the Sharm al-Shaykh follow-up committee, which ended in Washington yesterday.

In a statement after the meeting Culture Minister Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh said that the Council of Ministers called on the Security Council to hold an emergency meeting to discuss the effects of the Israeli military siege imposed on our people. 'Abd-Rabbuh added that another request was sent to the Arab League today seeking support for the Palestinian people. He stressed that Israel has no right to dismiss Palestinian students from any Palestinian university anywhere.

[Begin 'Abd-Rabbuh recording] Israel fully violated the accords by postponing withdrawal from Hebron, continuing settlement activities, and imposing siege on the Palestinian people.

We do not seek a relationship with Israel. If Israel seeks separation, we will encourage all kinds of political, economic, and security separation. However, Israel is following a racist policy. It imposes a siege on the Palestinian people, implements unilateral separation, and prevents the Palestinian people from setting up economic contacts and relations with the sisterly Arab countries. We call for opening the borders with Egypt, Jordan, and

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the other Arab countries to help the Palestinian economy build direct relations without any restrictions or obstacles. This is the first step to end economic deterioration. Washington's steps and proposals have no value; they are merely partial and limited tranquilizers. [end recording]

Palestinian Affairs: Further on Ministers' Statements on Cabinet Meeting

JN3003182396 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1100 GMT 30 Mar 96

[Report by 'Adil al-Za'nun in Gaza from "Today's Events" program]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Council of Ministers of the National Authority asserted that it was impossible to continue the peace process under Israel's military siege and policy of collective punishment and starvation against the Palestinian people.

The Council of Ministers held a meeting under President Yasir 'Arafat at the Presidency in Gaza today and approved an emergency plan to face the impact of the blockade. Regarding the issues discussed by the Council of Ministers, Finance Minister Muhammad Zuhdi al-Nashashibi said:

[Begin al-Nashashibi recording] The Council of Ministers discussed current developments, as well as the Washington meeting, which was aimed at implementing the resolutions of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit. As a result of Palestinian-Arab-Egyptian-European cooperation, a qualitative step was taken in terms of the outcome and deliberations of the Follow-Up Committee. The Washington meeting had planned to confine its discussions to the so-called terrorism issue, but the Egyptian, Arab, and European parties insisted that the meeting review the three points raised in the Sharm al-Shaykh summit statement. So, statements were made asserting that a meeting would be held in Brussels on the 12th [month not specified] to look into the Palestinian people's economic demands.

The Council of Ministers also profoundly studied the issue of employing workers who lost their jobs in Israel, and stressed the need to urge Israel to compensate these workers and provide the necessary amounts of money for the Palestinian employment fund. We began employing 10,000 workers, and we are planning to employ more. We also expect a loan from a consortium of banks, as well as international aid, to carry out development projects. [end recording] [passage omitted]

Culture Minister Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh said he was extremely astonished by the expected official reception of Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres by certain Arab countries at a time when the Peres government is continuing its siege, as well as its policy of starvation against the Palestinian people. He asserted that this visit would encourage Israel to continue its current policy instead of halting it. He added that Israel's continued confiscation of land shows that the peace process between us no longer exists.

Meanwhile, Labor Minister Samir Ghawshah asserted that the proposals made by the Washington meeting of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit's Follow-Up Committee would be, if implemented, a step toward easing the impact of the blockade, although it is not enough. He also said that Israel was continuing its policy to weaken the peace process.

The Council of Ministers then called for opening the crossings between Palestine and Egypt and between Palestine and Jordan. It also called for the opening of the safe crossing between the West Bank governorates and Gaza governorates.

Palestinian Affairs: PSS Report Warns Closure Weakening 'Arafat; Beilin Comments

TA2903181396 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 29 Mar 96

[Sulayman al-Shafa'i video report]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Sources in the Palestinian Security Service [PSS] warn that the prolonged closure is weakening 'Arafat's position in the territories. In a report to Israeli security elements, the Palestinians warn that the growing shortages may result in serious riots and a loss of control. Our correspondent Sulayman al-Shafa'i reports:

[Begin al-Shafa'i recording] The residents of the territories have been under a total closure for more than a month. Although Israel has transferred basic foodstuffs to the Gaza Strip, nobody can afford to buy food. Some 22,000 laborers who worked in Israel on a daily basis are now fighting for their bare survival. [passage omitted]

PSS members have warned their Israeli counterparts that the prolonged closure could have a devastating effect. The PSS sources say 'Arafat's position has been weakened. The Palestinian public sees him as someone who obeys the Israeli Government and acts only according to its dictates. [passage omitted]

The PSS sources maintain that the Palestinian public in the territories is prey to ongoing incitement, emphasizing that under the closure conditions, things may get out of control. [passage omitted]

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The PSS sources recall the mass riots at the Erez checkpoint almost two years ago as an example of what may happen. The sources say that the residents of the territories are angry about the policy of a prolonged closure implemented by Shim'on Peres and claim that the people are unwilling to pay the price for Peres' success in the elections. [end recording]

Minister Yosi Beilin reacted to the assessments of the PSS sources by saying that there is no connection between the closure and the elections in Israel and that the closure will be lifted once the leading Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] terrorists are dealt with properly.

[Begin Beilin recording] I think the danger facing 'Arafat comes not only from the closure but primarily from those Hamas elements who constitute a violent opposition to him. I think 'Arafat's struggle against Hamas will strengthen him in future. [end recording]

Palestinian Affairs: Canada To Give Explosive-Detecting Equipment to Authority

JN3103164596 Gaza Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation Television Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 31 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] An agreement was signed between the National Authority and Canada at the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation today. According to the agreement, Canada will give to the National Authority modern technical explosive-detecting equipment in implementation of the recommendations of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit follow-up committee.

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Official on 'Arafat's Offer To 'Suspend Operations'

MM0104105896 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 31 Mar 96 pp 1, 6

[Report by Jamal Khashuqji: "Hamas Talks of 'Arafat's Offer To Suspend Operations"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] London — A prominent leading figure in the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, yesterday made public an offer to ease tension in the Gaza Strip which he said was submitted to the movement recently by the Palestinian National Authority.

The official, who asked to remain anonymous, said that Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat had informed mediators, who included a number of Israeli Arabs, of his willingness to suspend the measures taken against the institutions and cadres of both Hamas and the Islamic Jihad Movement and to release a number of the two movement's members held in National Authority prisons in return for a pledge from the movement to suspend its military operations against Israeli targets until the completion of the Israeli general elections, scheduled to be held 29 May.

The leading figure believes that 'Arafat's aim is "to give the Israeli peace camp a chance in the elections," pointing out that the offer included a pledge "to allow the movement's institutions to carry out their activities in the self-rule areas and to freeze the Authority's decision to disband the military organizations of the resistance factions as long as Hamas is committed to the agreements with the Authority."

The leading figure said that the key point in the offer, which was conveyed by the mediation committee to a number of the movement's leaders in the Gaza Strip, some of whom are in detention, is "the formation of a joint committee to reactivate Palestinian activities in Jerusalem after the Israeli elections," pointing out that the Authority stressed through the mediation committee that "Jerusalem represents a joint factor for all Palestinian forces, and this prompts coordination of efforts in this connection."

On the movement's position on the Authority's offer, which is the first since the bombing campaign staged by Hamas, the prominent official said: "We have informed the mediation committee that any decision concerning the initiation of a dialogue with the Authority should be approved by all the movement's leading frameworks inside and outside [the self-rule areas]." He stressed "the need to secure the right conditions for the dialogue before starting it." He added: "All detainees held in the Authority's jails should be released, all property confiscated from the movement's institutions should be returned in order to enable these institutions to resume their services for the Palestinian people, and the Authority's distortion and defamation campaign against the movement should be suspended." He said that these "conditions must be secured in order to make any dialogue between the movement and the Authority a success."

The Hamas official criticized recent appeals by Palestinian figures urging the movement to suspend military action against Israeli targets in order to engage in a dialogue with the Authority. He said that "military action represents a policy for the movement to liberate the Palestinian land, just as the talks with the Zionists represent a policy for the Authority's leaders to implement its plan." He stressed that his movement "refuses to abandon the military option. It believes that it [the military option] does not conflict with a potential dialogue or an inter-Palestinian agreement." [passage omitted]

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Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Criticizes Authority, Urges 'Self-Restraint'

JN3103104896 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 31 Mar 96 p 17

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman-AL-DUSTUR — The Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, said that it will keep the banner of jihad fluttering high in the sky over Palestine until the occupation is removed. Hamas said it will continue to be the people's invincible shield, defending their legitimate rights to liberation, repatriation, and self-determination.

In a statement to the Palestinian people, Hamas said that it has always been a safety valve to prevent Palestinian society from slipping into the abyss of civil war. It added that any dialogue with the prisoners is not a real dialogue, but rather an attempt to wrest acknowledgement that these criminal practices are legitimate. It stated: Anyone who seeks dialogue should not resort to arresting thousands of people, destroying establishments, and chasing mujahidin.

Hamas hailed the honest figures in Fatah Movement and the [Palestinian] Authority's agencies who revolted against the authority's measures against the Palestinian people and demanded an end to them because they serve the Zionist enemy's interests.

It warned that the continuation of the authority's measures against the Palestinian people and their establishments will have negative consequences. It urged its supporters to remain steadfast and show self-restraint to maintain national unity and prevent the shedding of the Palestinian blood. It added that it can not ensure that there will be no individual reactions to these practices, which herald an enormous popular rebellion.

Palestinian Affairs: Security Forces Detain 2 'Senior' Hamas Leaders in Nabulus

TA2903145396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1400 GMT 29 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Palestinian security officials in Nabulus say they have detained two senior Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] leaders: Shaykh Jamal Mansur and Shaykh Jamal Salim. Those men were among the 400 Palestinians who were deported to Lebanon in 1992.

Palestinian Affairs: Police Use Force To Disperse 500 Demonstrators in Nabulus

TA2903183196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1800 GMT 29 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] This afternoon, the Palestinian police used force to disperse a demonstration in Nabulus staged by the parents of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] members incarcerated in Nabulus and Jordan. The demonstration started near the Nabulus prison at the end of the families' visit to the prison. The Palestinian policemen dispersed the 500 demonstrators with clubs and detained three of them.

Palestinian Affairs: Jihad Leader Vows Human Bombs Against Israel To Continue

NC0104121496 Paris AFP in English 1127 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, April 1 (AFP) — The leader of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad vowed the "human bomb" attacks on Israel would never stop until the last Jews had left the lands of Palestine, in an interview published Monday [1 April].

"The Jews will not enjoy safety until they return to the countries in which they lived before they raped our Palestine," Ramadan 'Abdallah al-Shallah told the Arab weekly AL-WASAT in an interview from his base in Lebanon.

"Peace with Israel is an impossibility. The Israelis must expect more strikes", after a suicide bombing by a Jihad militant on March 4 in Tel Aviv which left 13 dead and 125 injured, al-Shallah said.

A security crackdown by Israel and assistance from the United States which followed the bombing "cannot protect Israel because the human bombs cannot be defeated," he vowed.

The Jihad bombing came hard on the heels of three attacks by Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], the larger Palestinian militant group, which left 47 dead in Jerusalem and Ashqelon. Al-Shallah said it was "difficult to predict if the bombings would cause the Arab-Israeli peace process to collapse. But it will not succeed either. "The conflict between us and Israel will remain a war in which both sides seek to score points without either landing a knockout blow," he said.

He acknowledged there was an "understanding" between Jihad and the larger Hamas group, adding, "we are eager to develop the relationship and raise it to the level of the savage war being waged against Islam."

More than 700 Hamas and Jihad members have been arrested by Yasir 'Arafat's Palestinian Authority (PA) since the spate of bombings, but al-Shallah underlined "we are doing all we can to prevent" violence between Palestinians. "We are putting the highest pressure on our own cadres to stay in control, but it is difficult to continue convincing them to stay silent in the face of humiliation, oppression and murder by the PA."

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And he ruled out a Jihad attempt to kill 'Arafat, saying, "political assassination is not a way to solve the problem."

Meanwhile, he added every anti-Israeli operation by Jihad would "bear the name" of his predecessor Fathi al-Shaqaqi killed last October in Malta, by suspected Israeli agents.

Palestinian Affairs: Israel Prevents Fatah Members From Attending Gaza Meeting

JN3003144796 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1300 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israeli occupation forces today prevented many members of the Fatah Revolutionary Council from travelling to Gaza to take part in the council's meeting, scheduled for today. Our correspondent in occupied Jerusalem said that Brigadier General al-Hajj Khalid Mismar, deputy general commissioner for political and moral guidance and member of the Revolutionary Council, was one of those prevented from travelling to Gaza.

Palestinian Affairs: Fatah Statement Warns of Israeli Settlement Expansion

JN2903205096 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1800 GMT 29 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Fatah Movement warned against the dangers of Israeli settlement expansion, describing it as a cancerous expansion that contradicts international legitimacy, human values and rights, and subjects the peace process to collapse.

In a statement issued on the 20th anniversary of Land Day, the movement calls on national and Islamic organizations and people from all walks of life to support the National Authority and reject all attempts to abort the Palestinian national plan.

In its statement, the movement remembered the Land Day anniversary, reminding of the heroism and sacrifices of the Palestinian people that were crowned by the establishment of the National Authority on the road to establishing a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital.

Palestinian Affairs: U.S. 'Biased' at Follow-up Forum; New Intifadah 'Imminent'

MM2903161696 London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI in Arabic 29 Mar 96 p 15

[Editorial: "Indications of Imminent Resumption of Intifadah"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Israeli security forces are continuing their collective punishments against inhabitants of the occupied Arab territories. Yesterday they arrested more than 300 young men in Bi'r Zayt on charges of sympathizing with the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas. Prime Minister Shim'on Peres has emphasized his refusal to pull out of Hebron. The withdrawal process should have begun yesterday under the Oslo agreement.

Such Israeli practices are undermining the peace process and stripping all the agreements signed with the Palestinian National Authority [PNA] of substance, reducing them to mere ink on paper.

If we take into consideration that the closure imposed on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip since the four suicide operations carried out by Hamas elements in Tel Aviv, occupied Jerusalem, and Ashqelon will not be lifted before the Israeli parliamentary elections, scheduled for the end of May, the peace process' present appears gloomy, and there is nothing to indicate that the future will be any different.

The closure represents the ugliest form of terrorism, because it means depriving more than 60,000 Palestinian families of their livelihood and inflicting on the Palestinian economy losses totaling, according to the most conservative estimates, $5 million, which puts the PNA into direct confrontation with its starved citizens and dispels the atmosphere of optimism that prevailed with the launch of the peace process and subsequently its outcome, that is the elections and the withdrawals.

How can the people adhere to the peace process and support the side asking them to continue this process, when they are unable to move their patients to Jerusalem for treatment because Army forces are preventing the ambulance vehicles from passing through the crossing points. How can they respect and have confidence in the agreements and those who signed them, when they can see that a young Israeli solder is capable of preventing Ahmad Quray', "Abu-'Ala'," speaker of the elected Palestinian Legislative Council, from leaving Gaza to go to his house in the West Bank.

Regrettably, the Israeli authorities are embarking on such terrorist measures on the pretext of fighting terrorism. And they are receiving unlimited U.S. support. They have obtained an open authorization in this connection from the Sharm al-Shaykh summit, which was attended by more than 14 Arab leaders and foreign ministers.

The U.S. Administration, which yesterday hosted the terrorism committee arising from the said summit, put one issue on the agenda, namely ways of confronting Hamas' "terrorism" and pooling Arab and Israeli efforts in this connection. It resisted all Arab and French

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pressures and the demand that the other points of the Sharm al-Shaykh statement, including the lifting of the closure and the resumption of the Arab-Israeli negotiations, should be honored.

This biased U.S. position can only lead to a further escalation in violent actions in the region and to the peace process being torpedoed completely. Palestinian public opinion, which condemned recent fedayeen operations because of their desire for stability and to make the negotiations a success, has begun to shift completely, supporting the Palestinian opposition's stands and casting doubt on the benefit of the dialogue with the Israelis. This shift could result in very serious consequences. Suffice it to say that Israeli arrests in Bi'r Zayt yesterday were met with protests and stones.

This reminds us that a resumption of the intifadah is still on the cards as a strong possibility.

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Algeria

Algeria: Zeroual Invites Leaders, Parties to National Dialogue

LD3003175596 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President of the Republic Liamine Zeroual today invited national figures and leaders of the political parties and national organizations to exchange views.

According to a statement released by the presidency, the aim of the meetings is to find the best ways and means to consolidate a pluralistic democracy that stems from our deep-rooted values, to which the Algerian people legitimately aspire.

The invitation is in line with the commitments made by the president to the nation, particularly on the eve of the presidential elections, through which the people regained their sovereign right to elect.

The invitation is also an expression of the president's wish to promote national dialogue, which he has persistently reiterated.

National dialogue constitutes the best way within the Algerian state's endeavor to get the country out of the crisis and complete the process of the democratic structuring of our national institutions.

The meetings will begin on 6 April.

Algeria: Parties Welcome 6 Apr National Dialogue

LD3103232496 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 2200 GMT 31 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The new rounds of dialogue will be resumed next Saturday [6 April] between President Liamine Zeroual and leaders of political parties, national figures, and organizations. The president has invited the chairman of the Higher State Council and its members, the chairman of the Constitutional Council, various chairmen of parliamentary councils, and recent former heads of government to take part in the meetings which will begin on 6 April.

Consultation will also be sought from members of the Committee of 22 on History, officials of the historic provinces, members of the revolution council, and personalities representing areas of the south, leaders of political parties, and national organizations and associations.

The National Liberation Front Party [FLN] has responded positively to the invitation of the president of the republic to political parties and national figures for dialogue and consultation from 6 April. The news came in the official information bulletin of the FLN, EL MAOUQIF.

For its part, the National Party for Solidarity and Development has considered, in a statement released today, the latest invitation of the President Zeroual as more evidence of the desire of the president to promote constructive dialogue as a civilizing value that would encourage the gradual and ultimate return to civil peace.

Algeria: Leaders of FIS Excluded From Dialogue Proposed by Zeroual

LD3103225196 Paris France-2 Teletext in French 2044 GMT 31 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The leaders of the FIS [Islamic Salvation Front] are excluded from the "dialogue" suggested to the opposition by President Zeroual, people said in Algiers on 31 March.

Their absence on the list of about 50 personalities invited to discuss the future of the country "is proof of the changes" that have come about after the presidential elections, people said.

Zeroual has already held unsuccessful negotiations with the jailed leader of the FIS. [passage omitted]

Algeria: Premier Cites Country's Ability To Challenge Terrorism

LD0104102196 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 0600 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The prime minister [Ahmed Ouyahia] has attended the completion of the repair operation of the national newspaper quarters that was damaged by the explosion of a booby-trapped car bomb on 11 February 1996. The prime minister has confirmed on this occasion Algeria's ability to rise to challenges thanks to its workers and cadres:

[Begin Ouyahia recording] If we have achieved this work within one and a half months, and demonstrated that we are able to be active and work according to normal standards in other countries, then we have confirmed that the country is strong and firm in defying challenges, particularly when it comes to attempts on its stability or to thwart the Algerian people's morale or interfere with the security of the Algerian citizen.

If there is a message to be deduced from this incident, it is a message that I sum up in blessing [those who died] and in being proud of our workers' efforts, and in being proud first and foremost as an Algerian like the rest of us, of the ability of our country to challenge blind terrorism not only in security. This should not be forgotten, the building of what was destroyed, the

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reparation and consolidation of what was tempered with. This is due to the efforts of Algerian workers, civil servants, and cadres, who allowed the country to remain intact. [end recording]

Algeria: Booby Trapped Car Kills 3, Injures 8 in Kabylie

LD3003094796 Paris LCI Television in French 0900 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A booby-trapped car killed three people and injured eight others in Kabylie, Algeria yesterday. The booby-trapped car was parked in front of the building of the Bordj Menaiel youth club, situated 70 kilometers east of Algiers.

Egypt

Egypt: Interior Minister on Hijackers, Terrorists Abroad

NC2903221696 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2115 GMT 29 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 29 Mar (MENA)—Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi said Egypt is following up on the investigation Libyan authorities are conducting with the three Egyptians who hijacked a plane bound for Cairo from Luxor last Wednesday [27 March]. He said an Egyptian security team is following up with the brother Libyans all the measures Libya is taking in connection with the incident. He added that Libyan authorities are cooperating with the Egyptian team.

The interior minister asserted in an interview with AL-AHRAM, to be published tomorrow, that the Libyans are keeping Egypt abreast of developments in the interrogation process.

Al-Alfi said preliminary results have not clarified specific motives for the hijacking. I believe that the hijacking was very primitive and that the hijackers were absolutely not armed, al-Alfi said.

He added: We contacted the Libyan authorities immediately after the hijacking to be reassured of the passengers' safety. We set up an operations room at the ministry immediately after the hijacking was announced to determine the motives and study the security aspects.

The interior minister reaffirmed that the first defendant, Muhammad Mahmud Humayd Salim, who led the hijacking, is mentally disturbed and addicted to drugs and alcohol and that he is irresponsible.

The Egyptian interior minister said that a standing committee, including assistant ministers and experts, was set up more than a year ago to conduct a regular follow up of security procedures at airports and develop them to guarantee the safety of passengers, travelers, and means of transport across the different outlets. The committee studies every new addition in the field of securing outlets, he said, adding: We have the most updated devices that detect weapons and explosives.

The interior minister said that Egypt will request Libya hand over the three hijackers, since the crime was committed in Egyptian airspace and on Egyptian soil, and because the persons involved are Egyptians. He added that legal measures will be taken against them.

Moreover, the interior minister revealed that Egypt has detailed information on the three terrorists involved in the sinful attempt against President Mubarak in the Ethiopian capital last year. He said that they are still in Sudan and that Egypt is moving in all directions and making contacts with different states to unite efforts to confront terrorism and put into effect the resolutions adopted at the peacemakers summit in Sharm al-Shaykh. He remarked that the ultimate goal is to protect the future of mankind, block the financing of terrorists, prevent terrorists from traveling between different countries, and denying them residence or political asylum. He added that some states, including Britain, have started to adopt measures to review the position of terrorists residing on their land.

In the interview, the interior minister said that the security agencies are accurately monitoring the movements of terrorists in eastern Europe and the United States, with particular emphasis on the Arabs of Bosnia, who were recently expelled from Bosnia.

He added that the goal is to prevent them from returning to Egypt to commit their crimes. The security agencies are compiling data on them, since they constitute a real danger at the moment.

The interior minister denied any contacts with the banned Muslim Brotherhood, pointing out that the security apparatus is capable of facing up to anyone who tries to break the law. He stressed that the contacts between the international organization of the Muslim Brotherhood and their agents in Egypt are being monitored closely. We have all the information on their finance, he said.

Egypt: Libya Reportedly Taking Measures To Extradite Hijackers

NC3003105896 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1015 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 30 Mar (MENA) — Today, the newspaper AL-MASA' said that the Libyan authorities, pursuant to the Libyan-Egyptian agreements and the fraternal relations between the two peoples, do

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not object to handing over the hijackers of the Egyptian plane that landed on Libyan territory on Wednesday [27 March].

The paper said the Libyan authorities are taking measures to deport the hijackers to Cairo.

Egypt: EgyptAir Official—No Security on Domestic Flights

NC3003134896 Cairo MENA in English
1250 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Mar 30 (MENA) — Head of the security section at the national-flag carrier EgyptAir Major General Ahmad Bayyumi said he does not think the hijackers of the Egyptian plane had any political, material or even psychological motives to hijack the plane.

I think the main hijacker Bakhit Muhammad Mahmud was high after taking a dose of drugs right before he boarded the plane in Luxor, Bayyumi said.

Bayyumi told MENA today that there is such confidence on the part of the world in the Egyptian security. He was answering a question on the possible effect of the hijacking operation on the world's view of security, stability and tourism in Egypt.

Hijacking operations occur all over the world and are not an Egyptian peculiarity, he said, stressing that traffic at the different Egyptian airports was not affected by such a casual occurrence. However, there are plans to avert any similar incidents in the future, Bayyumi added.

The top security official at EgyptAir institution said that security men at the flag-carrier are highly qualified and prepared to face up to any emergency. There is also full coordination among security agencies at the various airports in Egypt, he said, setting out that this is the reason domestic flights are not manned with security, including the flight of the plane that was hijacked to Libya while en route from Luxor to cairo.

Luxor Airport is supplied with all necessary devices for detecting arms, explosives or flammable materials, Bayyumi said. It is likely that the hijackers deceived the plane captain into believing that they were wielding molotov cocktails and gunpowder, he said.

We are waiting for the findings of the investigations which might come out with some surprises, he said, underlining that there will be no leniency with whoever proved as having assisted the hijackers.

The head of EgyptAir security denied reports published by yesterday's press about questioning of two EgyptAir security officers over assisting the hijackers. The two men, Nash'at Tanyus and 'Imad 'Adly, are not security officers at EgyptAir but they work at another section at Luxor Airport, Bayyumi noted.

On the reason domestic flights are not provided with security men, he said that there is full dependence on the security measures at the airports. Besides, the number of security officers is low, the security official said.

On the statements made by the hijacked plane pilot about five extra passengers who boarded the plane, Bayyumi said the number on the reservation list at Luxor Airport was 145 passengers, including the three hijackers.

Egypt: Musa Denies 'Differences' With Libya Over Hijacked Plane

NC3003144696 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1430 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 30 Mar (MENA)— Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has denied Arab and foreign media reports that there are Egyptian-Libyan diffrences in the aftermath of the hijacking of the Egyptian plane on Thursday [28 March].

In a press statement today, Musa said these reports are groundless. The Libyan authorities dealt in a very positive way with the hijacking affair. All passengers received good treatment from the Libyan authorities. He indicated that Egypt had received full cooperation and understanding from the Libyan authorities. There are no differences over this affair whatsoever.

Musa said: I totally deny these reports. He indicated that there is full cooperation between the two governments in this regard.

Egypt: Government To Ask Libya To Extradite Hijackers

NC3003171396 Cairo MENA in English
1555 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, March 30 (MENA)— Egypt will ask Libya to hand over three Egyptians who on Wednesday [27 March] hijacked an EgyptAir plane to Libya, Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi said in press statements published here today. The crime was committed in Egyptian airspace, on Egyptian territory, and the three accused are Egyptian, the minister told the Cairo Arabic daily "AL-AHRAM" in an interview.

Legal measures will be taken against the three. Egypt was following investigations being conducted by the Libyan authorities with the hijackers. "an Egyptian security team is following up with Libyan brothers measures being taken by Libya in this connection," the minister said.

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A restaurant owner in Luxor, an 18-year old son, and a 17-year old nephew hijacked the plane which was en route from Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, to Cairo via Luxor. All passengers arrived safely in Cairo on Thursday. The three hijackers surrendered to the Libyan authorities. The Libyan authorities are fully cooperating with the Egyptian security team which has been sent to Libya to follow up investigations. The Libyan authorities are passing to Egypt up-to-date developments as regards the interrogation of the accused, the minister said.

Preliminary results of investigations did not specify any definite motives for the crime. The minister of interior said he believed that the hijacking was carried out in a "very primitive manner." The three hijackers were not armed, he said.

Egypt: Libya's Al-Qadhdhafi Orders Hijackers Handed Over

NC3103110396 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1045 GMT 31 Mar 96

[Unscheduled news bulletin]

[FBIS Translated Text] Brother Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi has ordered that the hijackers of the Egyptian airliner be handed over to the Egyptian authorities. This was stated by Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif. He said all papers and documents on the interrogations conducted by the Libyan authorities will also be handed over and that contacts between the concerned authorities are being held to implement this decision today.

Egypt: Airliner Hijackers Arrive in Cairo From Libya

NC3103162396 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1540 GMT 31 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 31 Mar (MENA)—Egypt today received the hijackers of the Egyptian plane that was forced to land in Libya last Wednesday [27 March] as it was flying to Cairo from Luxor.

The defendants arrived in Egypt today after Colonel al-Qadhdhafi issued orders to hand them over to the Egyptian authorities.

Egypt: Yemeni President Salih Arrives in Cairo

NC3003110096 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1030 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 30 Mar (MENA) — Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih arrived in Cairo at noon today for a two-day visit to Egypt.

He was received at the airport by President Muhammad Husni Mubarak.

Egypt: Mubarak, Yemeni President Salih Hold Private Talks

NC3003114496 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1100 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 30 Mar (MENA) — President Husni Mubarak and Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih held a round of talks immediately after the arrival of the Yemeni president in Cairo earlier today.

Official sources said only the two presidents attended the meeting.

Egypt: Mubarak, Salih End Private Talks; Musa Comments

NC3003123696 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1212 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 30 Mar (MENA) — President Muhammad Husni Mubarak and Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih ended the round of private talks they held immediately after the arrival of the Yemeni president in Cairo at noon today.

Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa said the talks between the two presidents will be resumed this evening and tomorrow morning. He said the talks deal with bilateral relations and the situation in the region and in the Arab world.

He said the talks will also deal with the Yemeni-Eritrean dispute over the al-Hanish island. He hoped that a peaceful solution to this conflict will be found and that progress will be made to implement the proposals on this issue.

On Eritrea's rejection of the original and the amended French proposals on the dispute, Musa said the two presidents will discuss this issue this evening.

The foreign minister said the Egyptian and Yemeni delegations held talks on the sidelines of the summit meeting between Presidents Mubarak and Salih.

He said a number of agreements on various issues will probably be signed between the two countries tomorrow, Sunday [31 March].

Egypt: Yemeni President Orders Release of Egyptian Fishing Boats

NC3003193796 Cairo MENA in English 1806 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, March 30 (MENA)— Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih has issued immediate instructions to release Egyptian fishing boats detained in Yemen and to allow them to return to Egypt.

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The issue of the boats, which had entered Yemeni territorial waters, was among the issues covered by talks between President Husni Mubarak and the Yemeni president, Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif said. The Yemeni president issued his instructions for the release of the boats following his meeting with President Mubarak this evening.

Egypt: Mubarak, Yemen's Salih Hold News Conference

NC3103132096 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1005 GMT 31 Mar 96

[News conference by President Husni Mubarak and Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih in Cairo on 31 March — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Mubarak] I again wish to welcome brother President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, president of the Yemen Arab Republic. In addition to the close ties between Yemen and Egypt, my personal relationship with him goes back a long way. Even in the darkest times, our contacts with Yemen were not broken. I again welcome the brother president and his delegation. During our talks yesterday and today, we discussed many bilateral issues, the dispute between Yemen and Eritrea, other Arab problems, the likelihood of holding an Arab summit, and Arab solidarity. I welcome the brother president. Thank you.

[Salih] Thank you, brother President Mubarak. I am happy to visit Egypt and meet with the brother president. Just as the brother president has said, we discussed the aspects of our bilateral cooperation and the close and historic relations that have linked Yemen and Egypt since ancient times. They are eternal, splendid, and excellent relations that are not marred by any problem. We also discussed cooperation including trade exchange and the problem of the fishermen. We had 11 Egyptian fishing boats detained in Yemen because they had broken the rules. It is not forbidden to catch fish, but they were fishing selectively, polluting the environment, and causing other problems. We agreed to hold a meeting between the ministries in charge of fisheries in both countries to organize fishing operations. We have now released the 11 fishing boats. Today, we signed an agreement on bilateral security cooperation to safeguard the two fraternal countries' security. The brother president and myself have agreed to hold a meeting of the Egyptian-Yemeni higher joint committee under the chairmanship of the two countries' prime ministers in the next few weeks or months — a specific date will be determined later. This meeting's postponement was not for any political reason but because of Yemen's preoccupation with its program of financial and administrative reform. We also discussed the incident connected with the Yemeni Hanish al-Kabir Island that was occupied by the Eritrean brothers. All these things delayed the meeting of the joint ministerial committee. The brother president and myself also agreed to issue instructions to the two governments pertaining to trade exchange and cooperation in this sphere. There are many good opportunities for further Yemeni-Egyptian cooperation. I again extend thanks and appreciation to the brother president for his warm hospitality. Thank you Mr. President.

[Correspondent] Your Excellency President Husni Mubarak, there are reports that there is a radiation leak from Israel's Dimona reactor. Now we know that Egypt constantly emphasizes the need to keep the region free of weapons of mass destruction. What information does Egypt have on this matter? If these reports are true, what position will Egypt adopt, particularly in view of the fact that a conference will be held in Cairo on 11 April in which the purpose will be to proclaim Africa a region free of weapons of mass destruction?

[Mubarak] The proclamation of Africa as a region free of weapons of mass destruction is one issue and keeping the Middle East clear of these weapons is another. On 11 April, the African leaders will sign an agreement on this issue. As to the reports about a radiation leak from the Dimona reactor, there is no strong evidence that they are true. We are still trying to get information on whether there is really a leak, particularly one that can contaminate underground water. On the other hand, we are still demanding that this region be kept free of weapons of mass destruction of all types, nuclear, biological, chemical, and other types. We will adhere to this position until we can clear the region of all such weapons.

[Correspondent] Your Excellency Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, we welcome Your Excellency to Egypt. Egyptian television wishes to note that Egypt has made contributions to numerous Arab causes. How much has Egypt contributed to solving the dispute over the Hanish al-Kabir Island? Does an agreement exist to safeguard the Red Sea's security? We should note here that the Egyptian role is close to the initiative made by France over the island dispute.

[Salih] After the attack on the Yemeni Hanish al-Kabir Island, Egypt acted. The brother president sent to us his foreign minister and Brother 'Umar Sulayman to learn what had happened. We briefed him on the incident. We welcomed any mediation by Egypt because it is a fraternal Arab and African country. We are perfectly sure, however, that the Eritrean brothers are not sincere in dealing with the Egyptian mediation. They are rejecting the French mediation, let alone Egyptian

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or Arab-African mediation. They are afraid of accepting any initiative that we accept. We are sure that the Eritreans will accuse any Egyptian initiative to solve the dispute of being biased. We are sure of this, particularly after it became clear that they do not have documents that can convince the world that they own the Yemeni Hanish al-Kabir Island. I wish to repeat that we welcome the Egyptian mediation. We asked the Eritrean brothers to sign the agreement on principles that they originally requested as a prelude to our joint recourse to the International Court of Justice [ICJ]. We told them that we accept the French-proposed agreement on principles and are willing to agree on a bilateral solution as soon as possible and are willing to meet with them for this purpose in Cairo, Sharm al-Shaykh, or anywhere else. But we have one condition: They must first sign the agreement on principles that they originally wanted as a first step before recourse to the IJC. Then the French made their initiative that stated that IJC arbiters can judge on the issue. We agreed to this. When the French first made their initiative, the Eritreans told them to go first to Yemen because they were sure that the Yemenis were not going to accept a French initiative. After Yemen accepted the initiative, the Eritreans changed their position and began inviting us to settle the dispute bilaterally. What does this mean? It means trying to circumvent the French efforts.

[Mubarak] I would like to add something to what brother President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih has said. Egypt does not want to offer an initiative supporting one side against the other. When an initiative is made, the two sides must agree on it. We are still working to bring the viewpoints of the two sides closer so that the problem will not become worse. We are still working on this.

[Correspondent Sawsan Abu-Husayn from AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT newspaper] I have three questions, one for His Excellency President Mubarak and two for President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih....

[Mubarak, interrupting] Only three questions from AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT? If it were AL-AHRAM, that would be fine. [laughter]

[Correspondent Abu-Husayn] Your Excellency President Mubarak: French President Jacques Chirac will arrive here next week. It is known that he offered a French initiative. Have you and President Salih discussed the possibility of amending this initiative? My question to President Salih is: Yemen and Eritrea are linked by historic relations. Yemen was among the first countries to support Eritrea's independence. Why don't your excellency and the Eritrean president meet to bring viewpoints closer and to agree on the declaration of principles itself. My second question to President Salih is about Arab reconciliation and the resumption of Yemeni-Kuwaiti relations. Thank you.

[Mubarak] With regard to the visit by French President Jacques Chirac, I think there are contacts at the level of the foreign ministers. France offered an initiative. Yemen accepted it, and Eritrea has not yet given a final response. I will not be able to discuss this with President Chirac because this concerns Yemen and Eritrea.

[Salih] Concerning a meeting with the Eritrean president, we do not mind this, but first we have to agree on the signing of the declaration of principles that was presented by France. We fear that if the meeting takes place and we fail to reach an agreement, we may resort to other options. Signing the declaration of principles would serve as a guard: if any summit fails, we can go to the International Court of Justice, not to other options. We want the option of a peaceful solution, not anything else. The declaration of principles will serve as a guard; after that, we do not object to a meeting, even if after a week, in Cairo, or in any other Egyptian city.

[Correspondent from Nile International Television] My question is addressed to both President Mubarak and President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih: What are the main clauses of the security agreement that Egypt and Yemen have signed? Does it include extradition of criminals and protection of fishing boats in the Red Sea?

[Salih] That was a security agreement between the two fraternal countries. We must cooperate with Egypt in anything that serves the security of Egypt. The constitutional procedure in the two countries must, however, be followed. The agreement will go through the constitutional procedure. You can read the clauses of this agreement in the press, in AL-AHRAM and other newspapers tomorrow, God willing. I believe the agreement does not endanger any other country. I leave the word to my brother President Mubarak.

[Mubarak] There is nothing more I can say. I agree with that.

[Correspondent] This is a two-part question for President Mubarak from AL-HAYAH. What will Egypt's stand be if Israel proposes an option other than the Palestinian one on the pretext of protecting its security?

[Mubarak] An option other than the Palestinian one? What do you mean?

[Correspondent] What the political and diplomatic circles are now saying about the Likud, namely that there is the possibility of proposing an option other than the Palestinian one. The second part of my question is this:

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In light of Israel's arbitrary measures against the Palestinians, such as the arrests and other measures, does this mean that the Palestinians will pay the price for the forthcoming Israeli elections, especially since we know that Israel has failed to abide by the agreements it has signed so far? What effects will this have on the peace process? Can the siege of the Palestinian people be possibly lifted through an international action? A third question is to President 'Ali Salih. What was the nature of your meeting yesterday with former [Yemeni] President 'Ali Nasir?

[Salih] What?

[Correspondent] The nature of your meeting yesterday with former President 'Ali Nasir. Thank you.

[Mubarak] First, regarding the other option that you meant but did not say it frankly, the answer is no. We do not support these options. There are Palestinians. They have their territories. There must be full Israeli withdrawal from these territories. They must have the right to self-determination. The option of merging with Jordan or other options, as some news agencies might report, is the prerogative of President 'Arafat and His Majesty King Husayn. A merger between the two countries should not be imposed.

Regarding the lifting of the siege, we agreed to hold the Sharm al-Shaykh conference primarily to discuss the peace issue, specifically following the recent developments and the siege imposed on the Palestinians. There was much debate in the presence of the Israeli prime minister. We are still working out ways to lift the siege and to give the Palestinians the opportunity to deal with their own affairs. As to the nonimplementation of the agreement, we are still saying that we should implement the agreement. We should always expect acts of violence aimed at impeding the peace process to occur any day until that process is completed. We must not allow this violence to win and halt the peace process because the latter is extremely important.

[Salih] The meeting with former President 'Ali Nasir was similar in nature to my meetings with Yemeni citizens. I met with a Yemeni citizen who has come to Cairo to attend a seminar at the Arab Studies Center that he sponsors. We discussed how to support this center and establish branches in Yemen and other Arab countries.

[Correspondent] Will the coming stage see an increase in the volume of trade exchange and economic cooperation between Egypt and Yemen. The other question is to President Mubarak: The draft resolution prepared by the African group to the Security Council confirms Sudan's involvement in terrorist actions. Does your excellency expect Sudan's leaders to return to their senses in order to protect their people?

[Mubarak] I hope that they will return to their senses. We hope that the problem will be solved without any problems or sanctions imposed on Sudan. We are working hard to ensure that the sanctions will not directly affect the Sudanese people once they are imposed.

[Salih] Regarding the trade exchange between Yemen and Egypt, the meeting of the two prime ministers and the higher ministerial committee will certainly increase the volume of trade exchange between the two fraternal countries.

[Correspondent Yasir 'Abd-al-Hakim from Nile International Television] Recently, there have been reports that an Arab summit will be held. Is this true? Will such a summit discuss the Yemeni-Eritrean conflict?

[Mubarak] Some brothers, like Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi and before him Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan, called for an Arab summit. But this needs time. Under these circumstances, and with the differences that emerged after the invasion and occupation of Kuwait and the resulting Arab rift, we cannot just push a button and change hearts and souls in a minute. This is not possible. We are working hard to bring views closer, to solve problems, and to ease consciences in the Arab world. This takes time, but I do not think an Arab summit is possible now, although I hope it is. An Arab summit will not discuss the conflict with Eritrea because Eritrea is an African country.

[Correspondent] Your Excellency President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih: How do you view the situation in the Gulf, and how do you view the issue of peace in the Middle East in light of Yemen's participation at the recent Sharm al-Shaykh summit?

[Salih] With regard to the situation in the Gulf, we hope that peace and security will be maintained there, and that no differences will reemerge in that sensitive region. With regard to the peace process, Yemen consistently supports a just and comprehensive peace under which the Arabs regain their full rights — the restoration of the occupied Arab territories in Palestine, the Golan, and southern Lebanon. We strongly support the peace process, but we believe, and there are indications that the Israelis are not serious about the peace process. The evidence of this is Israel's use of violence, terrorism — intellectual, political, and economic terrorism — and the policy of starvation against the Palestinian Arab people. The pictures we see on television on the oppression and terrorism against the Palestinian people, and the arrest of Palestinian citizens in their universities, causes

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anger and provokes the Arabs. Every violence calls for counterviolence. We are for a just peace. Egypt played a basic role in the peace process, but we do not find any Israeli cooperation with the efforts Egypt has been playing since the Camp David agreements. We support full and comprehensive peace and the restoration of Arab rights, including holy Jerusalem. We hope that Israel will cooperate with the Arab nation in the peace process, but we doubt that it is really serious about the peace process.

[Correspondent from the BBC] President 'Ali Abdallah Salih: On the occasion of your visit to Cairo — and we are very interested in Yemen's domestic policies — we would like to ask the following question: Those who follow Yemen's domestic policy now notice closeness between your ruling party and what is left of the Yemeni Socialist Party [YSP]. Some people see this as being done at the expense of the Yemeni Reform Grouping [YRG], your partner in the government coalition. If you and the YSP are coming closer, will you offer a general amnesty to cover the other members of the YSP, those who fled after the war?

[Salih] Thank you very much. The General Peoples Congress is in coalition with the YRG, which was our main partner in the battle for unity and constitutional legitimacy. Days before the end of the war, the leadership offered a general, comprehensive amnesty on all those who were led into the treason of war, the crime of separation, and the betrayal of the Constitution of the Republic of Yemen. By that amnesty, we wanted to limit the scope of violence and to serve the battle for unity. A large number of people benefited from the amnesty decision. A few people remained; they include the 16 persons who are wanted for trial; namely, the secession leaders. No general pardon for them can be issued, but they will stand trial. Our courts are independent, and the government will be committed to every court ruling. We cannot issue an amnesty, because if we do, if we pardon the 16 people, we will actually be trying the constitutional legitimacy, the current leadership, and those who entrenched unity. It will mean that those people were right, but if the courts acquit them, we will be ready to implement this.

[Correspondent] My question is addressed to President Mubarak. In spite of the French initiative and its amended version, there still is a wide gap between the Eritrean and Yemeni positions. Is there any way to bring views closer or are there any specific Egyptian proposals to bring views closer, particularly since Yemen insists on signing a declaration of principles and Eritrea insists on discussing all the islands of the archipelago, not just Hanish?

[Mubarak] I do not want to get into details. However, I would like to say that the first proposal was to refer the case to the ICJ. There was a Tunisian initiative in this regard. But there still are differences. Yemen accepted the amended version of the French initiative, but Eritrea did not. Yemen's contention is that they should both accept the French initiative, then meet to find a solution at the bilateral level if this is possible. We are working on this. Yemen says that they did not reach an agreement after long meetings. President 'Ali and the brothers in Yemen believe that this might complicate matters and have unnecessary repercussions. But we are still making efforts with both sides to see what we can do.

[Correspondent] A question for His Excellency the Yemeni president. Some Western newspapers have reported economic problems in Yemen since the war. Will you give us an idea of the economic conditions in Yemen?

[Salih] Thank you very much. The war has undoubtedly taken its toll on the national economy. The partitioning of Yemen many years before the war and the crisis that preceded the war both put a heavy burden on the national economy. But after we emerged from the struggle to defend our unity, the government worked out a program for financial, economic, and administrative reform.

The first phase of the program has ended and we are now in the second phase. The program has started to produce useful results. We believe that Yemen has experienced and won three battles. The first battle was the Yemeni revolution; the second was the triumph of Yemeni unity; and, the third and most important is the battle for the national economy. We are struggling now just as we did to build the republic and consolidate unity, only now it is in handling the economic, financial, and administrative situation in the Yemeni Republic. Positive signs have appeared in cooperation with the World Bank and the IMF. We benefit from the experience of our brothers in Egypt. We take what fits our circumstances, not everything that the World Bank and the IMF request; we only take what we see as suitable and that does not affect our policy. Thank you

[Correspondent] A question for President Mubarak. We watched the outcome of the Sharm al-Shaykh follow-up committee meetings in Washington. We are aware of the Egyptian efforts to lift the blockade of the Palestinians. What about the Syrian-Israeli track, which is frozen right now, particularly since we have heard that President Hafiz al-Asad will arrive in Cairo soon?

[Mubarak] President Hafiz al-Asad visited me some time ago. What you heard about was probably the

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telephone contact between myself and President al-Asad. The Syrian-Israeli track halted in the wake of the incidents that occurred in Israel. Once Israel imposed a complete siege of the Palestinians, negotiations became difficult from the Arab viewpoint. The Palestinians are experiencing very harsh conditions. Our brothers in Syria cannot negotiate under the circumstances.

However, I believe that Syrian-Israeli negotiations might start after the Israeli elections. I hope they will start earlier, but I believe that they might start after the Israeli elections.

Now, regarding the Washington meetings: We are committed to the statement that came out of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit. Number one is the peace process; this is the essence. After that comes security measures. The third thing is terrorism in all its forms and on both sides, not on one side only. We committed ourselves to this, as we did at Sharm al-Shaykh. The statement reiterates what I agreed upon with U.S. President Bill Clinton. As for the Washington meeting, some negotiators wanted to steer it in a different direction. But we are committed to what was agreed upon at Sharm al-Shaykh and the principles set out in its final statement. This was the general Arab view at the meeting. A foreign ministerial meeting will be held in the last third of April to complete the mechanism. We will insist on what we agreed upon in the statement that was issued at Sharm al-Shaykh.

[Correspondent Jamil 'Ali from Yemeni Television] Within the framework of boosting cooperation between the Arab Republic of Egypt and the Republic of Yemen and within the framework of the trade and security agreements signed, has His Excellency President Husni Mubark been invited to visit Yemen; and has he accepted it or has a date been fixed?

[Mubarak] Do I need an invitation to go to Yemen? [laughter] President 'Ali Salih does not need an invitation from me. He just tells me he is coming. I do not need an invitation from him, I just tell him: I am coming to visit you. We have got used to this in the Arab world. Invitations are protocols. We just agree with each other. Take Syria for example. I call the Syrian president and tell him: I am coming the day after tomorrow. He calls to say: I am coming to see you next week. Periodic meetings or visits do not require invitations and acceptances. Our relations with Yemen are really excellent. I visit Yemen any time I feel appropriate.

[Correspondent Muhammad Husayn from Cairo Radio] My question is for President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih. By what means can Iraq be helped end its current crisis and return to the Arab ranks? What is Yemen's view on this issue?

[Salih] We have repeatedly reiterated this stand. We have called on the brothers in Iraq to cooperate with the international legitimacy resolutions. We believe that such cooperation would smooth things a lot and help end the embargo imposed on the Iraqi people. We hope that Iraq will cooperate with the international community. We call on the United Nations and the international community to ease the burdens of the Iraqi people.

[Unidentified Correspondent] President Mubarak: If a solution to the Hanish Island problem is reached, does the proposed Egyptian ideas include the dispatch of forces to help insure security there?

[Mubarak] I do not believe that the issue requires Egyptian forces. This is a small island between the Yemeni and Eritrean Republics. When they reach a solution, it will not require the presence of forces or a separation of forces or any such measures at all. Neither Yemen nor Eritrea need forces.

[Correspondent Fadiyah Shibbin from AKHIR SA'AH] As you mentioned, terrorism has become an international phenomenon that takes various shapes and forms. Is there a dire need at present to hold an international conference to combat terrorism, especially as the international community has started to realize the importance of this issue? Will the near future see Egyptian efforts to call such a conference to formulate international security regulations for controlling and eliminating the problem of terrorism?

[Mubarak] I have been talking about terrorism since 1986, when the phenomenon was very restricted. But no one paid attention. They said that Egypt was talking just because one person did something or just because something had happened in Algeria. We kept reiterating the appeals until terrorism appeared in the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Japan, Italy, and other countries. Not a single country has escaped it; this phenomenon has spread like an epidemic. The world has begun to wake up to this danger. Some countries are sheltering some terrorists who committed crimes in their countries and killed innocent people. Some countries are granting them asylum, and funds are even transferred from some countries to the terrorist groups so that the latter can continue their terrorist activities. I still say that an international conference must be held so that all countries will commit themselves to what is agreed on in order to spare themselves the evils that will constantly increase worldwide as a result of terrorism. Thank you.

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Egypt, Yemen Sign Security Agreement

JN3103201896 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Television Network in English 1930 GMT 31 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The president of the Republic [of Yemen], General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih and President Husni Mubarak of Egypt held a final session of talks today in Cairo where two leaders completed discussions on all the issues of concern to the two countries.

The president, meanwhile, attended the signing ceremony of the security agreement between Yemen and Egypt. The agreement was signed by the interior ministers of both countries, Colonel Husayn Muhammad 'Arab, from the Yemeni side, and Gen. Hasan al-Alfi from the Egyptian side.

President Mubarak also attended the signing ceremony of the agreement which stipulates that the two sides will enact effective measures to combat terrorism directed against one of the two countries, and to combat organized crimes, and would work to ban all the activities against the other country by not allowing its territories to become ground for the planning or implementation of plans designed against the other country.

The signing ceremony of the agreement was attended by the members of the delegations to the talks from both sides.

Egypt: Yemeni President Leaves for Aswan

NC3103112196 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1105 GMT 31 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 31 Mar (MENA) — Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih left Cairo for Aswan this afternoon. The Yemeni president was seen off at the airport by President Husni Mubarak.

Egypt: Experts Monitoring Radioactivity at Borders With Israel

NC3003215996 Cairo MENA in English 2140 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Alexandria, March 30—(MENA)—Chairman of the Egyptian Atomic Energy Agency Dr. Hisham Fu'ad said that a team of Egyptian experts in nuclear and atomic operations has been dispatched to the Egyptian-Israeli common borders to follow up any prospective lead from the Israeli Dimona reactor. The Egyptian Atomic Energy Agency has the most advanced network for monitoring radioactivity he said.

These remarks came in a speech Dr. Fu'ad delivered today at the inauguration of the authority new branch in Alexandria which was read out on his behalf by Authority Deputy Chairman Dr. Muhammad Nasif.

Work is now under way for setting up an experimental nuclear reactor in Inshas, he added.

Egypt: Musa on Reported Leak From Israeli Reactor, Nuclear Weapons

NC3103174596 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1700 GMT 31 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 31 Mar (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa stressed that the Egyptian committee following the issue of nuclear leakage from the Dimona reactor is studying it from all political, scientific, legal, environmental, and military aspects.

In statements today, Musa said that this committee, which is formed from the concerned ministries and the Egyptian Foreign Ministry, is checking if there has been any leak from Israel's nuclear reactor in the Negev Desert and also studying all possible scenarios to ascertain all the facts and the consequences of such an incident in case it does happen.

He noted President Husni Mubarak's remarks on this issue at his press conference with the Yemeni president today and his assertion that Egypt will not change its stands, policy, or insistence on making the Middle East a region free of weapons of mass destruction and freeing the region of nuclear weapons. He stressed that no arrangements can be made in the Middle East until the region becomes free of nuclear weapons.

In response to a question about contradictory statements by Israeli officials about this issue, Musa that the whole issue is under detailed and objective study.

Egypt: Mubarak Speaks to German TV About Peace Summit, Terrorism

NC3003082296 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 0500 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Husni Mubarak has stressed that the international summit of peacemakers in Sharm al-Shaykh was held to advance the peace process. In a statement to the German news network NTV aired last night, Mubarak said the summit provided a chance to discuss peace issues on bilateral and multilateral levels. He said combating terrorism was one of the topics raised at the summit. He noted that terrorism has a direct influence on peace because it stops peace efforts and thwarts the peace process. He said the summit tried to prevent this and to maintain the peace march.

President Mubarak said he was satisfied with the results of the summit. He said the participation of the leaders

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of the United States, Germany, and Britain in the summit, and their meeting with all parties, supported the peace process and besieged terrorism. President Mubarak explained that Egypt has always been the driving force behind the entire peace process. Had it not been for the initiative of the late President Anwar al-Sadat, he said, no peace would have been established in the Middle East. He explained that the Camp David agreement was the nucleus of the peace process in the region. If we had implemented the second part of that agreement, he remarked, we would not have had the amount of problems we have today. He said 15 years after the signing of the Camp David agreement, everybody realized the importance of peace. This led to the convening of the Madrid conference and later the signing of peace agreements between the Palestinians and the Israelis and the Jordanians and the Israelis, he said.

President Mubarak stressed that Syria is willing to have peace, and that major moves will be made because President Hafiz al-Asad realizes the value and usefulness of peace. The president said Europe, by virtue of its geographic location, is affected by the Middle East developments. Noting that Europe is making positive steps for peace in the region, he voiced hope that it will redouble its efforts, especially concerning economic support for the Palestinians. He said this is necessary because the Palestinians may lose faith in peace if their economic and living conditions are not improved.

President Mubarak said he was the first to call attention to the danger of terrorism. He said that since 1986, he has been calling for an international conference to combat terrorism, although terrorism was not as rampant is it is today. Ten years later, he said, the world realized the danger of terrorism and the need to hold an international conference to combat it. He stressed that it is still not too late, and the world can triumph over terrorism.

Egypt: Musa Emphasizes Palestinian Issue Primarily 'Political'

NC3103180696 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1655 GMT 31 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 31 Mar (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has warned against handling the Palestinian issue as a humanitarian issue rather than a political problem, affirming that it is a political issue above all and that we should not fall into the trap of viewing it as a humanitarian problem.

Speaking to reporters today, Musa stressed that unless Israel and the Palestinian Administration set about honestly implementing the agreements they have signed, the political dimension of the issue will be in jeopardy, creating a state of frustration. He remarked that this will lead to acts of violence, which none of the parties want.

Musa added: Talking merely about opening the borders or allowing the entry of foodstuffs or medical material and treating the Palestinian issue as a humanitarian problem is wrong, since it is basically a political issue.

Musa said that if Israel does not implement its agreements with the Palestinians to eventually grant them the right to self-determination, it should not blame the Palestinians for the frustration that results. He added that Israel's failure to withdraw from Hebron in accordance with the Palestinian-Israeli agreement is a violation of the agreement and an obstruction of the peace process.

Musa pointed out that the meeting of the follow-up committee in Washington involved an in-depth discussion of the issue of violence. He appreciated the French and European stand as expressed by Italy at the meetings. He remarked that there was cooperation [words indistinct] and that most world states cannot accept the manipulation of issues pertaining to terrorism or peace to serve certain goals. He added that there should be balanced responses.

Musa added: If we oppose the acts of violence that lead to the killing of innocent people who have nothing to do with what is going on and if we condemn them, we equally condemn the policies of border closure, starvation, and collective punishment of the Palestinians, because this is unacceptable.

Egypt: Musa—Arab Summit 'Unlikely' at This Time

NC3003133396 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1255 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 30 Mar (MENA) — Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has announced that holding an Arab summit conference soon is unlikely.

Answering a reporter's question about the date of the Arab summit called for by Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, leader of the Libyan revolution, Musa said: "An Arab summit is not to be expected soon, However, this issue is constantly on our minds."

Concerning the Egyptian-Libyan talks over the extradition of the Egyptian airliner's hijackers, 'Amr Musa remarked: "This matter can be considered settled [muntahiyan]"

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Egypt: Ethiopian Envoy Comments on Sudan After Meeting Mubarak

NC0104110196 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1015 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 1 Apr (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak today received a written message from Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. Ambassador Kanjet Signior [name as received], envoy of Prime Minister Zenawi, handed the message to President Mubarak during their meeting today.

The Ethiopian envoy added that they had discussed some issues related to the OAU, since a meeting of the mechanism for conflict resolution will be held in Addis Ababa on 15 and 16 April. She added that the discussion also touched on the Security Council resolution on Sudan.

Asked about Ethiopia's stance regarding the sanctions expected to be imposed on Sudan, the Ethiopian envoy said: Let us not rush things, because this is something that concerns the Security Council and we do not know what the council members will decide.

In response to a question about the draft proposal on sanctions against Sudan, submitted by the nonaligned countries to the Security Council, the Ethiopian envoy said that consultations are under way among the council members to adopt the appropriate action in this regard. Once a quorum is secured, a decision will be made.

The Ethiopian envoy said that her country specifically demands that Sudan hand over the three terrorists involved in the assassination attempt against President Mubarak in Addis Ababa for trial. She added: This is a normal demand in view of the extradition treaty signed between Ethiopia and Sudan in 1984.

Asked if she expects Sudan to suspend its backing for terrorism in light of the international stance in this regard, she said: We hope that Sudan will do that, because terrorism is not in the interest of any party and must be condemned, as was the case during the Sharm al-Shaykh summit of peacemakers. She stressed that Africans must focus their attention on developing their countries, noting that terrorism is against development, which must take priority. She hoped that Sudan would concentrate its efforts on development instead of wasting them on other things.

Asked if Prime Minister Zenawi will attend the signing of the declaration to free Africa of weapons of mass destruction in Cairo this month, the Ethiopian envoy said: Maybe he will attend the ceremony.

Libya

Libya: Al-Qadhdhafi on Use of Foreign Airlines To Carry Pilgrims

LD0104061096 Tripoli Libyan Television Network in Arabic 1955 GMT 31 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] One of you asked about the pilgrimage. One of you is now telling me: the pilgrimage, the pilgrimage. Look here, the pilgrimage [words indistinct]. I am slightly clarifying the issue of the pilgrimage. [passage omitted]

They [foreign countries] interfered and said that Libyan airlines, the Libyan Airlines, is not allowed to leave Libya, and this is applied to the pilgrimage. When three Libyan planes left Libya, Libya was not allowed to fly, because the decision was applied to the pilgrimage; but we never accepted this pretext, and rejected it. When we wanted to demonstrate to them that a decision to this effect would not be applicable, irrespective of the price, we flew against their will in daytime. The challenge naturally continues. We fly planes from Libya irrespective of the consequences, because they do not understand that the pilgrimage issue neither concerns the Security Council nor any other issue. This is why they should comply with it, not us complying with it; they should comply with our decision in connection with the pilgrimage whenever we want to perform it.

[Words indistinct] the Libyan planes. Last year on the defiance flight, we sent one or two Libyan planes from Libya with the purpose of defying and destroying their resolution. But the Libyan planes, which naturally came from the West, have an expected lifetime, and the embargo which they are imposing on the spare parts [renders the planes] unsuitable for flights for transporting pilgrims over distances like these, particularly since they need to fly from Libya and land in Saudi [Arabia], and fly from Saudi [Arabia] and land in Libya, because Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia, or any country on the way is frightened of the resolution of the so-called Security Council for not receiving any of your planes. They tell them: How did you receive [the Libyan planes]? [passage omitted]

Even before they passed their resolutions, and before the inclusion of flying in the embargo, you know that the Libyan Airlines used to advertise and say that any airline in the world willing to transport Libyan pilgrims could apply. In the past, when you used to perform the pilgrimage, you never did that on Libyan Airlines, [but] on Bulgarian planes, etc.

When our brothers in Egypt wanted last year to solve the problem and side with the Libyan people, they said you had destroyed their resolution, challenged them and flew

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planes, but [concerning] the rest of the flights, which your planes are incapable of, Egyptair would come to Libya to take the pilgrims and bring them back again. We told them we had nothing to do with it, we would not apply for permission. They said no, Egypt would get it for itself and you had nothing to do with it. [passage omitted]

This case still exists this year. Egypt or any other country can obtain permission for itself [from the Security Council to transport the Libyan pilgrims to the holy lands], but we announce, and can announce, and I believe we are [indistinct words] that Libyan airlines announces to all international airlines which participate in transporting the Libyan pilgrims. Of course, numerous Arab and foreign airlines have already applied — Jordan, Egypt, Saudi [Arabia], and other airlines, I do not know where from, probably the specialists in the issue know about it, from Czech, Bulgaria, [name indistinct], and France. All of them applied and said we would carry the Libyan pilgrims. It is not our business if they apply for a permission. This was not there in the past.

On the defiance flight by which we destroyed their resolution, they never allowed any airline to send their planes to Libya. Now, they are forced to allow them to send their planes to Libya. As usual, as used to be the case before the embargo, we used to hire the cheapest [planes] to transport and bring back the pilgrims. This is the [word indistinct] situation, but if we say that most of us have performed the pilgrimage, and that when we wanted to destroy their resolution we challenged them and flew on our planes, we do not need to perform the pilgrimage and benefit any foreign airlines, etc. If this is the case, I can neither impose this, nor... [pauses] But when you decide this, the popular leaderships in the 47 regions [should] stir up the people and tell them without bothering yourselves, or holding congresses, the popular leadership demands this or that. If this takes place, it is fine, and if it is through the congresses, then let it be, but it is easier through the leaderships.

We say that we defy you, and we are prepared for the challenge. Let their planes take us wherever they want. We can fly the planes in a row, one after the other, to Jeddah, and [nobody] can ever prevent them, and we would not obtain permission from anyone. [passage omitted]

Libya: Article Views Increasing Internal Threat to al-Qadhdhafi

LD3103122596 London THE SUNDAY TIMES in English 31 Mar 96 p 15

["Islamic Revolt Jolts al-Qadhdhafi" by Marie Colvin]

[FBIS Transcribed Text]

Dictator Sends Out Helicopter Gunships To Crush 'Holy War'

MU'AMMAR AL-QADHDHAFI, the Libyan dictator, was forced to send in helicopter gunships and troops to Benghazi, his second largest city, last week as he struggled to quell an uprising by Islamic fundamentalists waging a "holy war" against him.

The northeast of the desert country became a battle zone as Islamic fighters escaping from jail joined fellow militants in a rebellion described by Arab sources as the most serious internal challenge to al-Qadhdhafi in almost three decades in power.

Fighting continued this weekend, with government troops said to have forced rebels to flee into the mountains. At the height of the combat last week, the government sent helicopter gunships to an area near the Mediterranean port of Benghazi. Sixteen Libyan troops, including two officers, were believed to have been killed along with at least seven of the rebels.

It was not the first time government troops had clashed with Islamic militants in Libya. But the fighting demonstrated an unexpected strength among fundamentalists, whose opposition to the dictator has grown as the economy deteriorates.

Ironically, al-Qadhdhafi, a pariah in the eyes of western governments because of his sponsorship of terrorism, is as much an enemy to Islamic fundamentalists at home. Their resentment is rooted in the privations suffered since the United Nations Security Council imposed an embargo four years ago on diplomatic relations, military imports and air travel. This followed al-Qadhdhafi's refusal to hand over two suspects in the 1988 bombing of a Pan Am jet over Lockerbie, Scotland, in which 270 people were killed.

The Fighting Islamic Group, which made its first public statement five months ago, claimed to be leading the battle. "We have declared jihad (holy war) for the sake of God against the apostate al-Qadhdhafi regime," 'Abdallah al-Sadek, the group's commander, told the AL-HAYAT newspaper in London. In an unprecedented move for a country that eschews any attempt to inform its people, let alone outsiders, Libya acknowledged its

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army had gone into action. But it said the battle was against "drug smugglers".

Reports of a rebellion, said JANA, the official news agency, were "lies and ill-intended rumours". Muhammad al-Hijazi, Libya's interior and justice minister, insisted that an uprising was impossible since al-Qadhdhafi had no political opponents. He also denied that any prisoners had escaped from prison for the simple — and improbable — reason that there were no prisons in Libya.

"The leader razed all Libyan prisons with bulldozers because there was no justification for keeping empty jails," al-Hijazi said. The fact that he commented on the troubles at all was an indication of the seriousness of the crisis.

According to Arab sources the unrest dates back to March 12, when Libyan security agents confronted three undercover members of the Islamic group. The Libyan agents discovered their identity cards were false and captured Khaled al-Sha'eri, a senior member. The other two escaped.

Al-Sha'eri's capture proved to be a disaster for the opposition. After interrogation and torture — he confessed and led Libyan agents to an extensive network of hideouts and arms caches.

But last week the army was forced into action again, moving against rebels to the east of Benghazi. The rebels were said later to have fled into the Al-Jabal Al-Akhdar mountains, one of the few regions offering any cover in a country dominated by desert.

Islamic fighters were joined by 70 prisoners who broke out of al-Kuwaifiya prison 12 miles north of Benghazi. The prison revolt apparently occurred because of a threatened transfer to the Abu Salim prison in Tripoli, which is under direct control of al-Qadhdhafi's feared intelligence forces.

Many of those who escaped were leaders of the revolts against al-Qadhdhafi's forces last June and September in Benghazi and other towns in eastern Libya. Those clashes left more than 100 dead.

Last week armed troops and security forces sealed off the coastal towns of Darnah and Al-Bayda, east of Benghazi on the road to Egypt. Al-Qadhdhafi ordered telephones, water and electricity supplies cut in Darnah.

If he is concerned, al-Qadhdhafi showed no signs of it last week. In fact he was very much his old self, praising the courage of Palestinian suicide bombers for killing Israelis and calling on Arab countries to donate to opponents to the peace process "10 times" the $100m [million] (65.5m) President Bill Clinton promised to Israel.

On Thursday he was seen in Benghazi handing flowers to some of the 152 passengers — mostly western tourists — stranded at a Libyan air base after their airliner was hijacked in Egypt.

Sudan

Sudan: Opposition—Government Secretly Importing Arms From PRC

EA2903145296 (Clandestine) Voice of Sudan Voice of the National Democratic Alliance in Arabic 1715 GMT 28 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Chinese ships, carrying ammunitions equipment and raw material have arrived at port Sudan.

The ships, belonging to (Bawal) Shipping Line Co., have been unloading their cargo at night to keep their activities secret. [passage omitted]

The arms and equipment were purchased with $300 million provided by Iran and Qatar.

The National Islamic Front's regime shipped the arms in a hurry in anticipation of sanctions after it declined to conform with the requirements of the UN Security Council's Resolution Number 1044.

Sudan: Arms Deal Concluded With China, Financed by Iran

NC3103095096 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0855 GMT 31 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Kuwait, 31 Mar (MENA) — Military sources have declared that Iran and a Gulf state have financed an arms and ammunition deal for the account of the ruling Islamic Front in Sudan. A contract concerning this deal was actually signed with China in February.

In statements to Kuwait's AL-WATAN today, the sources said that quantities of this deal have indeed arrived in Port Sudan port on ships owned by the Powers Shipping Company. The Sudanese authorities have been unloading the cargo at night with complete secrecy.

The sources noted that the Sudanese Government has made this step in anticipation of the UN sanctions that will be imposed on Sudan after the lapse of the 60 days set by the UN Security Council to hand over the three defendants involved in the assassination attempt on President Husni Mubarak in Addis Ababa in June 1995.

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Sudan: Al-Turabi Elected Head of New Parliament

AB0104102696 Paris AFP in English 1002 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Khartoum, April 1 (AFP) — The spiritual leader of Sudan's Islamic government, Hasan al-Turabi, was elected head of the new parliament on Monday [1 April] after no one contested his nomination.

The head of the old, appointed parliament nominated al-Turabi in the new body's first session since general elections in early March.

After no other candidates came forward, Turabi was named the new speaker, to cheers of "Allah akbar" (God is great) and "La ilaha ila Allah" (No God but the one God", Islam's ritual profession of faith.

Turabi gave a short acceptance speech, vowing to "continue the Islamic path" taken by the government of 'Umar al-Bashir, who came to power in a 1989 coup and was elected president in the March vote.

Al-Turabi had never held an official position in al-Bashir's government before being elected to parliament, but is considered the real power behind its Muslim fundamentalist leadership.

Sudan: SUNA Reports on al-Turabi's Election as Council President

AB0104125596 Khartoum SUNA in French 1141 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Khartoum, 1 Apr (SUNA) — Dr. Hasan'Abdallah al-Turabi has been unanimously elected president of the National Council (parliament). He was elected during the procedural session this morning under the chairmanship of Daoud al-Khalifa in his capacity as the eldest deputy.

During the same session, all the members of the National Council took the oath of office. This session will be followed later by another one during which the president-elect of the Republic will take the oath of office in the presence of the council and will make a speech to mark his election as president of the Republic and the beginning of his five-year term of office.

[Khartoum SUNA in English at 1142 GMT on 1 April adds the following: "Dr. Hasan 'Abdallah al-Turabi, secretary general of the Popular Arab and Islamic Conference, who was newly elected speaker of the National Assembly, announced at the end of the National Assembly's session today that the upcoming assembly's sessions will be held Monday [8 April]. On that day, President al-Bashir will choose his vice presidents and members of his government."]

Sudan: Government Formation Depends on Security Council Decisions

NC3103155396 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1440 GMT 31 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Khartoum, 31 Mar (MENA)— MENA correspondent in Khartoum has learned that the announcement of the new Sudanese Government and the proposed changes in constitutional positions—with the exception of the National Assembly, the parliament—will be postponed until the country learns which direction the UN Security Council debate is taking and what resolutions the Council will pass. The situation will be different and so will the formation of the government if sanctions are imposed on Sudan.

Our correspondent has also learned that the current consultations on forming a new government show a tendency, backed by the Islamic current, to entrust the position of defense minister and commanding general of the Armed Forces to Major General Muhammad al-Zubayr Salih, the current first vice president, so that President al-Bashir can dedicate all his time to the presidency. But the military high command has urged al-Bashir to continue to wear his military hat.

The correspondent learned that if al-Zubayr becomes defense minister, his present position of first vice president will be entrusted to 'Izz-al-Din al-Sayyid, former leading figure in the Democratic Unionist Party, former speaker of the Wadi al-Nil parliament, and chairman of the People's International Friendship Council. Police Major General George Kanqur Urbi [name as transliterated] from the south will retain his post as second vice president.

It is known that Dr. Hasan 'Abdallah al-Turabi, who won in the recent parliamentary elections, has become almost the only nominee for the National Assembly, which begins its meetings tomorrow with a procedural session to elect a speaker. President Elect 'Umar al-Bashir will then be invited to take the constitutional oath for a new presidential term that begins tomorrow and lasts for five years.

Sudan: Al-Turabi on Conflict With Egypt, Other Issues

NC2903115496 Cairo AL-SHA'B in Arabic 26 Mar 96 p 6

[Interview with Sudanese Islamic Front leader Dr. Hasan al-Turabi by 'Abd-al-Fattah Fayid in Khartoum; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Fayid] You are accused of involvement in the sinful assassination attempt against President Husni Mubarak in the Ethiopian capital.

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[Al-Turabi] Only one of those who organized the attempt flew to Sudan on the day of the incident. Perhaps he left a few days later. As for the other two, Sudan knows nothing about them.

[Fayid] What initiatives are you proposing to contain this crisis?

[Al-Turabi] It is difficult for either side, Egypt or Sudan, to approach the other now that the tension has been transferred to international forums.

[Fayid] What about Sudan's sheltering of terrorists?

[Al-Turabi] The Sudanese opposition in Egypt is greater than the Egyptian opposition in Sudan. Sudan is open to whoever wants to flee oppression in his own country. These people can enter Sudan without a visa. This has been happening since independence.

[Fayid] What will you be doing to confront the international community if it imposes a siege on Sudan if the defendants are not tried?

[Al-Turabi] There is a current of realism in the United States now opposing the Zionist current. The Zionist current is the one that wants to impose the siege. If the realists succeed, all the attempts to impose a siege will stop.

[Fayid] What about the opposition's boycott of the elections, the rigging it spoke about, and the low turnout during the elections?

[Al-Turabi] The turnout during elections in the United States is no more than 40 percent, yet they call it a democracy there.

[Fayid] Where will the tension between Egypt and Sudan end?

[Al-Turabi] One's experience of public action and international relations throughout the development of these relations reveals a great deal. I regret to say that relations with Egypt have not been settled since Sudan won independence, although the two countries are Muslim Arab neighbors. It seems to me that the bases of Egypt's stances are more dangerous than the actual stances themselves. There are sides in positions of power in Egypt that do not want an independent Sudan to rise.

This group of people believes that Egypt is historically more qualified [to rise and become independent]. Perhaps people are jealous when they see a brother occupying such a position knowing that they do not have the same heritage or resources.

[Fayid] What is the relationship linking this, the Addis Ababa incident, and the border dispute over Hala'ib?

[Al-Turabi] All these are the causes [of the tension between Egypt and Sudan]. The first cause is the Hala'ib issue. Since colonialism, Sudan and Egypt have not agreed on their border. The Egyptian authorities reached agreement with the British authorities on the border over a century ago. They recognized the shape of Sudan and its border.

The second cause is the Egyptian opposition in Sudan. Sudan has an opposition based in Egypt that is much stronger than the Egyptian opposition in Sudan.

Those Egyptians who have been living in Sudan a long time have taken Sudanese nationality. Sudan does not reject those who come to it, be they from Nigeria, Somalia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, or Zaire. It is not difficult to enter Sudan, be accepted, and then get nationality. First you get accepted socially, then legally.

There is no unofficial Egyptian community in Sudan. But they [the Egyptians] believe elements from the jihad opposition are hiding in Sudan. There is no doubt that the Sudanese opposition in Egypt is outspoken, using its newspaper to publicize what it likes, including its military plans for entering Sudan from the Eritrean gateway.

Again I stress Sudan's ability to absorb any number of immigrants from other countries and to give them nationality, unlike Egypt. Sudan is an open country, irrespective of how much its population increases. It accepts Nigerians by the million, Ethiopians by the million, and could also accept Egyptians by the million.

The Egyptian who wants to repel persecution has been able to enter Sudan without a visa since independence day. He can enter without identifying himself. Camels are smuggled from Sudan to Egypt by the thousand. Man is smaller than a camel so it is easy for him to enter and leave without anyone knowing.

Maybe they prepared the attempt to assassinate the Egyptian president using some people here, in Sudan, and there (he meant Ethiopia). Only one flew to Sudan on the day of the incident. Sudan knows nothing about the other two. It has searched for them following claims that they were in Sudan. It has not found them, since the person who prepared such an attempt could not just sit and wait to be arrested. Sudan has nine borders. If camels can leave then a man, who is smaller than a camel, can do the same.

[Fayid] Does Sudan have nothing to present in this case?

[Al-Turabi] We have given all the required assistance. As I said, we have searched for the wanted who have been named but have not found them. The prosecutor general has issued a warrant for the arrest of the

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defendants and we have offered rewards to whoever leads the police to them.

[Fayid] What, in your view, is the way to end the current crisis?

[Al-Turabi] It is difficult for the two parties to get closer. Some in Egypt have tried and so have third—Arab—parties. But all the Western parties want to cause estrangement and sedition between the two countries so that they will fight each other.

[Fayid] You said that some Egyptian parties have attempted reconciliation. What is your initiative?

[Al-Turabi] The press here does not attack the Egyptian regime. We do not even try to do so although we receive clippings from the Egyptian press daily. The official Egyptian press is the boldest in the world at leveling abuse. Adversaries always resort to innuendo when they attack each other, not to slander and abuse. Relations have become aggravated, even at international forums.

[Fayid] Where will this end?

[Al-Turabi] Official Egypt and those backing it can triumph over Sudan and Sudan and its backers can triumph over Egypt. Those backing official Egypt are known but those officially backing Sudan are not known. All the Arab, African, and Islamic peoples back Sudan, look toward it, and take care of it.

[Fayid] What about the resolution the Security Council intends to issue imposing a siege on Sudan? And what about U.S. pressure?

[Al-Turabi] U.S. campaigns come from pressure groups, because U.S. foreign policy is not formulated by those who elect the Senate or the President. Americans know nothing about the world outside and do not care much about it in the first place. They care about urgent domestic economic policy, the "pleasures of life." The pressure groups have started to attack Sudan and most of these attacks are fabricated.

But if they persist and think of intensifying the pressure against Sudan, this will lead to more extremism against them. It is difficult to overturn or undermine the situation in Sudan. On the contrary, the attacks will only strengthen it. The pressure groups might resort to pragmatism. There is a trend now in the United States against mainstream foreign policy, even on the issue of the recall of U.S. Embassy staff from Sudan. Those in charge over there were against this and said so frankly. There are known pressure groups belonging to the Zionists and they imposed this through their leaders.

I regret to say that many U.S. intelligence officers came here to ask me why I do not go directly to Israel and tell me that they will pave the way for me and make sure it is open. This will automatically mend my relations with the U.S. authorities, they said. I told them then that I would talk to a Jew in a religious dialogue and that there would be nothing wrong with that. But the issue of Israel and what it does to the Arabs is something else. Sudan is not obliged to approach Israel.

[Fayid] Is this the reason for the international campaign against Sudan?

[Al-Turabi] There are many reasons. But we have deprived them of every pretext. A few personalities in Sudan were arrested some time ago. When we released all the detained people we deprived Sudan's enemies of the pretext to attack it. Now, by holding elections here, we have deprived them of yet another pretext. The reason they are getting angrier with us is that they cannot find any pretexts to criticize us.

[Fayid] Will their attacks on Sudan stop, knowing that the opposition parties did not take part in the elections and that the elections were hotly contested?

[Al-Turabi] We do not want to apply democracy along Western lines [party pluralism]. We do not intend to imitate the West, particularly if their system is no good to us, just to please them. We go back to the real pillars of Islam founded by the Muslims centuries ago. The election committees here are formed along the lines of the Muslim system when they chose between 'Ali and 'Uthman, for example. We have removed the role the financial element plays in elections. The State advertises all the candidates so that money does not play a political role in elections, as is the case in the capitalist system.

Elections in Sudan have known traditions that cannot accept forgery. There might have been mistakes in the voters' records, perhaps because the records are incomplete and the people used their ration cards, where mistakes can appear.

The actual voter turnout refutes reports about this turnout in the elections. The percentages here are high; they never go below 60 percent. This shows the democracy we have here. The average voter turnout in the United States is 40 percent, yet they call it democracy there.

Some opposition figures did not believe the regime was seriously pushing for democracy. They thought this cannot be real and complete. Many have their regrets now because they missed their chance to participate in the elections.

[Fayid] What about the Islamic movement in the Arab world? Does it express the Islamic awakening in an honest manner?

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[Al-Turabi] No, no. The Islamic movement existed during the weak days of Islam. Some brave voices used to learn the basic elements of the religion by heart and draw educated people to the religion. But in recent years, perhaps because of disappointment in socialist, colonialist, and ethnic powers, people have returned to religion. The Islamic current is now a popular and overwhelming current for the masses in every Islamic country. The awakening is overwhelming but the movements still operate along the old lines: on a smaller scale, with greater sectarianism, with a greater inward view, and greater simplicity in the Islamic call.

[Fayid] What about south Sudan?

[Al-Turabi] Most of the sultans of the south are now participating in the government. The solution to the problem in the south will not take place in one go. It will come over time. Now there is reconciliation. I will announce this piece of news to you for the first time: A group of people from the south will return from abroad to settle in their homeland. Most of the sultans of the south and tribal leaders are now political chiefs, ministers, and deputies in the federal government or in their local governments. Some individuals from among the southern leaders are officials in the northern provinces. Those abroad, mere individuals, are traditional leaderships that want to retrieve part of their ministerial or leadership history. But Sudan is trying to contain all of these people. The call for secession has been toppled. Even those who used to call for it have abandoned it.

Sudan: Oil Supplies Sought in Exchange for Deporting Extremist

NC3103095396 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0925 GMT 31 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Kuwait, 31 Mar (MENA) — Informed Kuwaiti sources have reported that Sudan sent an emissary to a Gulf country in the past few days asking for oil supplies in exchange for deporting an extremist figure, originally a citizen of that Gulf country who has been living in Khartoum for the past few years.

The Kuwaiti newspaper AL-WATAN reports today that these Kuwaiti sources said that the Sudanese authorities decided to deport the extremist in question, although he had formerly been granted Sudanese citizenship, because his name was frequently linked with violent attacks carried out in several other countries. Consequently this person became a burdensome nuisance to the Sudanese Government.

It should be noted that this extremist used to play host to other extremists coming from various countries and used to give them jobs in the projects he owns in Sudan.

Sudan: Opposition—Army Mutinies; Central African Republic Pact

EA2903145796 (Clandestine) Voice of Sudan Voice of the National Democratic Alliance in Arabic 1715 GMT 28 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The (Zad Ali) Brigade now deployed in Juba town has disobeyed orders from general headquarters to move to the theatre of operations and other battle areas in southern Sudan.

Accordingly, the headquarters despatched an officer to go and conduct investigation into the matter, but he was arrested there. The officers and men of the brigade demanded the presence of the minister of defense in person.

Elsewhere, another brigade mutinied in Fattashah, north of Omdurman, and refused to move to southern Sudan, because it had returned from there six months ago after six years of operations.

In another development, opposition sources inside the country have uncovered an agreement between the National Islamic Front's [NIF] regime with authorities of the Central African Republic to permit NIF forces access through the Central African Republic in order to outflank the SPLA [Sudan People's Liberation Army] in the (Kungwa) area in Equatoria.

Sudan: Opposition—Sanctions Would Help Topple Regime

NC3103090696 Cairo Voice of the Arabs in Arabic 0610 GMT 31 Mar 96

[Telephone interview with 'Umar Nur-al-Dayim, secretary general of the Sudanese opposition al-Ummah Party, in Asmara, by Fayiz al- Miliji in Cairo; date not given; from the "Dialogue from Afar" program — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [al-Miliji] Dr. 'Umar, first of all, let us welcome you to this program.

[Nur-al-Dayim] Thank you.

[Al-Miliji] What is your comment on the Sudanese regime's persistent refusal to comply with UN Security Council Resolution 1044?

[Nur-al-Dayim] To begin with, we never expected this government that came to power through a coup d'etat to hand over the three suspects [implicated in assassination attempt on President Husni Mubarak in Addis Ababa in June 1995] in line with Resolution 1044. The reason is clear. If it handed over the terrorists, this would expose its own involvement; if it did not hand them over, it would also be guilty.

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In both cases, its actions are condemnable. For this reason, it has continued to make evasive statements to block the implementation of the Security Council resolution. This behavior shows a lack of political maturity. As you know, brother, Sudan is still a refuge for terrorist groups from various countries. Carlos, for example, came from South America. Other terrorists and infamous adventurers came from Afghanistan, Egypt, or elsewhere in the Arab world. They sought refuge in Sudan because the current regime disregards the wishes of the Sudanese people and the wishes of the regional countries and the international community. Now in light of the regime's failure to implement the resolution, the Security Council must adopt measures, perhaps in two days or sometime next week. These measures must be really deterrent. The Sudanese people have certainly paid a high price and suffered great hardships because of this regime. It must be overthrown. The Sudanese opposition demands the most stringent sanctions against the regime so that it will be possible to remove the regime at the lowest possible cost to the Sudanese people. We are determined that this regime should go.

[Al-Miliji] Dr. Nur-al-Dayim, Lieutenant General al-Bashir recently said that Sudan has a solid economy, that it can withstand any sanctions imposed by the Security Council, and that it is not afraid of sanctions. As an observer and an opposition figure, what can you tell us about current economic conditions in Sudan?

[Nur-al-Dayim] Economic conditions in Sudan are in a dire state. In the days when I was finance minister, the U.S. dollar's exchange rate on the black market was 12 Sudanese pounds. When this regime came to power, one of the members of its revolution council said that if they had not seized power, the U.S. dollar would have become equal to 20 Sudanese pounds. My brother, the U.S. dollar is now worth between 1400 and 1500 Sudanese pounds. This inflation has eliminated the middle class that has grown since the beginning of this century. The Sudanese people are living in dire, humiliating poverty. The country has never seen such conditions before. Al-Bashir's remarks show a lack of political maturity and contradict the facts. The facts are clear and need no further discussion. The collapse in Sudan is widespread. This is a country that daily spends millions on a continuing and spreading civil war. [passage omitted]

Sudan: National Congress Secretary General Criticizes U.S.

LD3103224196 Paris Radio France International in French 1830 GMT 31 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Chantal Lorho now reports on Sudan, more precisely on a man who is getting increasingly influent. He is Ghazi Salah al-din [Atabani]. Chantal Lorho:

[Lorho] In Khartoum, his name comes up almost as often as that of Hasan al-Turabi. He shares his charisma and his sense of humor. Some go as far as to say that the pupil is now more influent than his master. Ghazi Salah al-din, 44, was elected the secretary general of the National Congress last January, a body without any executive power, but in fact, it has a strong influence on the policies of the regime. Ghazi Salah al-din has climbed up the rungs of power at the speed of light since he was appointed the political adviser of the revolutionary council in 1989. He now has the reputation of being one of the strong men of the regime. His bete noire is the United States:

[Begin recording Salah al-din, in English with superimposed French translation] Well the United States is intoxicated with its power. It cannot stand the idea that independent voices can express themselves. It does not accept it from Cuba, China, or Sudan. For them, it does not matter whether you are Islamist or nationalist: You must submit as they say. We believe this goes against our national dignity, our traditions here in Sudan. Basically, we are independent people, very dignified people. [end recording]

[Lorho] Ghazi Salah al-din says ironically: Should the Americans decide one day to intervene in Sudan just as they intervened in Somalia, they would find me on the front line of fighters. This is typical of the man: He was imprisoned under al-Numayri, then fled to Libya, where he spent two years learning how to use Kalashnikov rifles and to drive tanks. Ghazi Salah al-din, who trained as a doctor, also studied in Great Britain for four years. He has retained the ways and means of speaking to westerners: He supports the ideal model of founding an Islamic state while seeming open:

[Begin recording Salah al-din, in English with superimposed French translation] Our ideal model borrows from the Islamic heritage in the wide sense of the term: The principles of Islam. However, we know that to be able to implement them in this day and age, we must take into account the challenge of modernity. We must find solutions to economic, political, and social problems. We must know how to deal with international relations. We have a lot to share with the entire humanity: We are interested in the French or American experiences for instance. If we find elements complying with our principles, we will be able to introduce them into our system, into our institutions. [end recording]

[Lorho] When Ghazi Salah al-din is asked what his qualities are, he says he is an open and optimistic

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democrat. His weak points? I am bad humored, he admits. He adds: I can also be excessively tolerant.

Sudan: Officers Arrested in Connection With Recent Coup Attempt

NC3003103196 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0940 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Khartoum, 30 Mar (MENA) — A MENA correspondent in Khartoum has learned that the Sudanese security authorities arrested Major General Babakr Jali, director of the military college who was dismissed only two months ago on suspicion of involvement in the recent coup attempt in Sudan.

The correspondent also learned that retired Colonel 'Ali Mustafa was also arrested for the same reason. Meanwhile, the security authorities released 70 of the 120 officers, noncommissioned officers, and soldiers who were arrested in the wake of the failed coup attempt.

The correspondent also learned that the investigations into the coup attempt have not discovered any specific lead on those involved and could not determine whether foreign parties were behind the attempt.

According to the initial information that was announced three weeks ago, a limited number of junior officers led by a colonel called 'Umar 'Awad al-Nuqr from the Staff and Command College were behind the attempt. Al-Nuqr earlier worked for military intelligence. The Sudanese authorities have so far failed to capture him.

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Bahrain

Bahrain: Crown Prince Holds Talks With Saudis Over Unrest

NC3003205096 Paris AFP in English 2006 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Riyadh, March 30 (AFP) — Bahrain's Crown Prince Shaykh Hamad Bin-'Isa Al Khalifah held talks Saturday [30 March] with Saudi leaders amid concerns over a 16-month wave of unrest in the Gulf archipelago, an Arab diplomat said.

Shaykh Hamad travelled to Riyadh on Saturday after Saudi leaders urged Manama to hold talks with the mainly Shiite Moslem Bahraini opposition.

Bahraini authorities were "concerned about a recent declaration from Saudi Defence Minister Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz calling for a return to reason and dialogue," said a diplomat who asked to remain anonymous.

Shaykh Hamad, who is also head of the armed forces, "went to Riyadh in order for the leaders to explain to him Saudi Arabia's position," the diplomat added.

The official agency SPA would only say that Shaykh Hamad met with Saudi Crown Prince 'Abdallah, without revealing details of their talks.

Prince Sultan made the remarks in an interview with the BBC on Wednesday in which he also said his country would support Manama with the "necessary firmness" if the troubles continued.

Bahrain has been hit by unrest in which 21 people have died since December 1994 when the Sunni Moslem authorities arrested a Shiite Moslem cleric, Shaykh 'Ali Salman, who had called for the restoration of parliament suspended in 1975.

The authorities have cracked down hard on the protests and refused to hold talks with opposition leaders, who are also calling for the release of all those imprisoned since the start of the troubles.

But Manama has accused outsiders of trying to stir up unrest in Bahrain in order to destabilise the country.

In November Saudi Interior Minister Nayif Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz said his country's security services were ready to go to Bahrain's aid. The two countries are linked by a long bridge.

(Bahraini opposition groups in exile maintain that Saudi riot squads helped Bahrain to quash anti-government protests at the start of the violence.)

Bahrain: Heir Apparent on Relations With Saudi Arabia

JN2903213596 Manama Bahrain Radio Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 29 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His Highness Shaykh Hamad Bin-'Isa Al Khalifah, heir apparent and commander-in-chief of the Defense Force, said the statements made by His Royal Highness Prince Sultan Bin- 'Abd-al-'Aziz, second deputy prime minister, defense and aviation minister, and inspector general in the sisterly Saudi Arabia, to the BBC on Wednesday, reflect the reality of the close relations between Saudi Arabia and the State of Bahrain in various fields and on the highest levels.

He said these statements also demonstrated that the passing attempts to tamper with Bahrain's security were in fact artificial actions inspired by external parties that do not want stability and goodness for the peoples and states of the Gulf Cooperation Council, the unity of its ranks, and stability of its march.

In a statement to the London-based AL-HAYAH published today, Shaykh Hamad expressed pride in this genuine Arab position that is not strange for Prince Sultan and Saudi Arabia to adopt toward Bahrain which views Saudi Arabia—leadership and people—with deep love, appreciation, and pride for the sincere supportive and effective positions toward Bahrain in all circumstances and at all times.

His highness emphasized that the sincere Bahraini people are determined to support their leadership, totally reject terrorist actions, and support their state and government in face of this tampering with their security, stability, and the future of their sons. They also support the continuation of dialogue and consultation with all sincere sons of the homeland through open meetings, national establishments, and the legitimate channels within which the good interaction between the leadership and the people has never ceased. The best evidence of this is that all enlightened patriotic elements from all sectors refrained from involving themselves in these actions that are contrary to our civilized Bahraini nature. Most members of this minority which tampers with security have been exposed and arrested. This led some of the remaining elements to resort to desperate actions that will only increase their isolation in the country and abroad.

Shaykh Hamad emphasized anew that life is normal in Bahrain, and that the Bahraini people and those who live in the country know this fact, which some hope through media exaggeration to undermine for objectives that are clear to all. This media exaggeration of the incidents lives only in the minds of those who are making it. His highness welcomed anybody to come and see this reality.

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Bahrain: Foreign Minister Says Country 'Enjoys Security, Stability'

JN3003083796 Riyadh Al-JAZIRAH in Arabic 24 Mar 96 pp 1, 28

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] His Excellency Shaykh Muhammad Bin- Mubarak Al Khalifah, foreign minister of the State of Bahrain, expressed gratitude and appreciation to the leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council states for their honorable position, represented in their unequivocal condemnation of the incidents of sabotage that were carried out by a stray clique over the past days.

In an exclusive statement to AL-JAZIRAH, he said: We in the State of Bahrain—government and people—are proud of these supportive and understanding positions, especially the position of Saudi Arabia, led by the custodian of the two holy mosques, his highness the crown prince, his highness the second deputy prime minister, and the Saudi people, as well as the other Gulf Cooperation Council states, Arab, Islamic, and friendly countries.

The Bahraini foreign minister said: I want to emphasize and reassure everyone that Bahrain enjoys security and stability. This stray clique will not realize its objectives. The Bahraini Government is dealing wisely with these incidents, and the criminals will not escape justice.

He also said that anyone who thinks about tampering with Bahrain's security will be deterred. [passage omitted]

Bahrain: Opposition Figure Denies Foreign Involvement in Protests

JN2903211196 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1630 GMT 29 Mar 96

[Interview with Sa'id Muhammad Shihabi, member of the Movement of the Free People of Bahrain, by correspondent Ahmad Suwaydan; place and date not given; from the "Week's Event" program—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] The pillars of the Bahraini opposition are unanimous that the execution of 'Isa Ahmad Qambar [Bahraini opposition figure] will not calm the situation in Bahrain, which has been experiencing trouble for more than a year now. They renewed their demand for restoring parliamentary and constitutional life and releasing all political prisoners in Manama. Therefore, following these disturbances in Bahrain and in light of recent developments, including the execution of Qambar and announcements by Riyadh and Amman of their readiness to help the Manama authorities, is there any possibility of opening a dialogue between the government and the opposition? Ahmad Suwaydan posed this question to Sa'id Muhammad Shihabi of the Movement of the Free People of Bahrain [harakat ahrar al-bahrain].

[Begin recording] [Shihabi] The opposition is trying to hold a dialogue with the government. From the beginning, the opposition made legitimate and constitutional demands and also insisted on holding an official dialogue to produce results acceptable to both sides. Regrettably, the government believes that a security solution will restore security in the country. In the view of the opposition, a security solution will not work, and the execution of Qambar or others, arresting large numbers of people, or sentencing people to long terms of imprisonment on groundless charges will not lead to a solution. This is what we believe and what informed people and observers say.

[Suwaydan] What are the motives of the opposition in Bahrain, and can the opposition change the political scene in Bahrain?

[Shihabi] The opposition is committed to a peaceful political path, and it will continue to make its demands peacefully through demonstrations and peaceful marches, statements, speeches, lectures, press interviews, and media statements. This is the policy of all ranks of the opposition.

Regarding the political scene, the opposition believes that the majority of the people of Bahrain stress the need to continue these peaceful demands until they are met. Regarding the position of foreign parties, we believe that important sides are beginning to understand the political equation of these demands and the need to press the Government of Bahrain to listen to the voice of reason and resort to quiet dialogue to solve the crisis.

[Suwaydan] What about reports on foreign forces playing a role in the Bahraini incidents, particularly Iran?

[Shihabi] We have heard this for many years, especially over the past two years. We simply say that if the government has any clue or any prisoner whom it can accuse of this, it will not sit back with folded arms. Meanwhile, it executed a Bahraini youth without being convicted, and it failed to convict anybody. We, as well as the world, believe that the movement has nothing to do with foreign parties.

[Suwaydan] How do you assess the Jordanian and Saudi positions?

[Shihabi] Undoubtedly, some people have problems with this opposition movement in Bahrain. We regret that some parties failed to understand the Bahraini people's motives to obtain their rights. Therefore, it is necessary for all these parties to understand these

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motives and to find a political solution to save the country from this crisis. We believe that both the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan have a role to play in this peaceful dialogue. It is in the interest of both of them and the region to start a peaceful dialogue. Escalating the situation and threatening to use more force and more soldiers will achieve nothing. [end recording]

Kuwait

Kuwait: Official Statement Refutes Iraqi Allegations of Spying

LD2903180396 Kuwait Radio Kuwait in Arabic 1700 GMT 29 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] An official source has made the following statement:

The State of Kuwait refutes the false accusations made against it by the Iraqi regime after the Iraqi authorities arrested a group of people who they claimed were spying on Kuwait's behalf. The official source said: These allegations are merely false accusations and an abhorrent repetition of acts from the play staged by the Iraqi regime, which is aiming to deflect attention from the regime's inhuman practices against its people in a desperate attempt to distract public opinion with side issues and drag Kuwait into its internal problems. Yet the Iraqi regime knows full well Kuwait's policy, which rejects any interference in the internal affairs of other states.

This is also a blatant attempt by the Iraqi regime to push Kuwait into provoking a crisis with the UN peacekeeping forces to pave the way for a battle, which the Iraqi regime intends to start with these forces.

The source added: These allegations coincide with the adoption of the latest Security Council Resolution No. 1051, regulating Iraq's exports and imports, in which the council reaffirms the relevant resolutions that Iraq is continuing to reject and refusing to implement.

Oman

Oman: Israel's Peres To Begin 2-Day Visit 1 Apr

JN3003210796 Muscat Sultanate of Oman Television Network in Arabic 2045 GMT 30 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] At the invitation of the government of His Majesty Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id, may God protect him, His Excellency Shim'on Peres, Prime Minister and minister of defense in the State of Israel, will pay an official visit to the Sultanate lasting for two days beginning 1 April 1996, during which he will meet with His Majesty Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id to discuss a number of issues and matters of interest to the Omani and Israeli sides, as well as regional and international developments.

Yemen

Yemen: President Salih Interviewed on Egypt Visit, Island Dispute

NC0104073196 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0600 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 1 Apr (MENA)—Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih has described Egyptian-Yemeni ties as deep-rooted, historic, and special.

In an interview with AL-AHRAM and AL-AKHBAR published today, Salih noted that Yemen believes these ties are special as compared to other relations, in view of the bonds linking the two countries and the blood sacrificed by the Egyptian people to defend the Yemeni revolution. The Yemeni president told AL-AHRAM that Egypt could play an effective role in mending the Arab rift and restoring Arab solidarity, adding that we are prepared to help in this regard.

Regarding the Arab League's role in this regard, President Salih said that the Arab League cannot play such role without inter-Arab reconciliation and solidarity.

The Yemeni president stressed that his country insists on a peaceful solution to the crisis involving the al-Hanish al-Kabir island. He noted that he will exert his utmost efforts with the world community to avoid a military escalation, adding that the Red Sea is a sensitive region. He added: If the Eritreans have a desire to resolve the matter on a bilateral basis, Egypt would be qualified to host a bilateral meeting because it has a major status and enjoys much respect.

Asked about Yemeni-Saudi relations, President Salih told AL-AHRAM that Yemeni-Saudi relations have been activated and are improving day by day, particularly following the signing of the memorandum of understanding last year.

On Yemen's participation in the summit of peacemakers, President Salih said: We participated in the summit at the invitation of Egypt. We were pessimistic about it, but Egypt played a good role in drafting the Sharm al-Shaykh final statement, which was appropriate and eased our pessimism.

Asked how the summit resolutions can be implemented, President Salih said: We want a mechanism that can end violence and terrorism in the world and in the countries that participated in the summit.

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Asked about reports on oil discoveries in Yemen, President Salih said that these discoveries are encouraging, promising, and will make a difference, but not as fast as the people expect. They will take some time.

In his interview with AL-AKHBAR, President Salih stressed that inter-Arab reconciliation and the restoration of Arab solidarity require more time and effort. Egypt, under the leadership of President Husni Mubarak, is the only country qualified to embark on this mission, in view of its pioneering role, status, and good ties with all parties, he added, noting that there is no point in holding any Arab summit that is not well planned and prepared for. He added that he had discussed with President Mubarak bilateral relations, inter-Arab relations, and international issues, in addition to bilateral trade and the question of Egyptian fishermen who fish at random in Yemeni waters.

The Yemeni president emphasized that his country does not permit any terrorists to stay on its territory and that there are no terrorists on Yemeni territory that the Yemeni authorities know of. He noted that measures will be taken against any person who violates the security of Yemen or Egypt according to the Constitutions in both countries and under the agreement regulating security cooperation.

In response to a question, President Salih said that there is no reason for a summit with Eritrean President Afwerki, adding that reports on such a summit originated from the media. He added: We refuse to meet with the Eritrean president unless Egyptian, Ethiopian, and French mediation is accepted, and according to this mediation, a declaration of principles must be signed first. Before such a document is signed and with the continued occupation of the island, it will be difficult to hold a summit with the Eritrean president.

Asked how Arab reconciliation can best be achieved, President Salih said: We are all working to restore Arab solidarity, which became lukewarm after the Gulf war. The success of this reconciliation is the collective responsibility of the Arab homeland, Arab leaders, and the Arab press, which need to bring views closer as a prelude to restoring solidarity.

Asked about the possibility of holding an Arab summit, President Salih said: It is possible to hold such summit, but what benefit would it bring now? Whoever calls for such a summit must coordinate with all the Arab leaders first to prepare for the summit.

Salih described Saudi-Yemeni ties as good, adding that they are growing and developing. The border committees established according to the memorandum of understanding continue to meet, and we are satisfied with their work, noting that the military committee has reached good results.

Asked about the Sharm al-Shaykh summit, President Salih said: We support the summit, which achieved unexpected positive results. We support the peace process but condemn all types and all sources of terrorism, particularly Israel's terrorism.

Asked about turning Aden into a free zone, President Salih said that this project is proceeding satisfactorily. He added: We started by building a pier for tankers in Aden. We made studies that lasted for six years and the project has moved from paper to actual practice.

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Iraq: 'Udayy Not To Run for Press Group Head

JN2903173696 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 29 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Iraqi Journalists Association [IJA] postponed its 13th term elections until Friday, 5 April, because of the lack of quorum of members of the IJA General Assembly. This came during the IJA General Assembly session held at the National Theater this morning in the presence of 650 members.

During the session, Taha al-Basri, first vice president of the IJA, read the message IJA President 'Udayy Saddam Husayn addressed to the IJA General Assembly. In the message, 'Udayy apologized for deciding not to run for the IJA presidency during the next term, praising the role of the journalists in enriching great Iraq's march, as well as their distinguished sacrifice in defending Iraq under the banner of leader President Saddam Husayn. [passage omitted]

The members of the IJA General Assembly requested to send a message to 'Udayy Saddam Husayn appealing to him to reverse his decision and continue to lead the journalists, in expression of the journalists' pride in and love for their President 'Udayy Saddam Husayn. They also decided to form a committee comprising Hani Wuhayyib, Nasrallah al-Dawudi, and Mu'ayyad 'Abd-al-Qadir to formulate this message. Taha al-Basri, first vice president of the IJA, then announced the extension of the nomination period for the IJA council until next Wednesday.

Iraq: Officers Reportedly Arrested While Fleeing

JN3003102596 Riyadh AL-JAZIRAH in Arabic 25 Mar 96 pp 1, 28

["Exclusive" report]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Kurdistan—The Iraqi regime's security and intelligence organs arrested 15 senior Iraqi officers in the border town of Khanaqin late last week. The officers were trying to flee Iraq to join the national opposition forces.

The arrested officers include five Republican Guard officers: Staff Brigadier General Faysal Husayn al-Tikriti, Brigadier General Husayn Ibrahim al-Tikriti, Major 'Awwad Muhammad from the intelligence organs, Captain Sabah Haytham, and Lieutenant Colonel Salah Salman. They were all transferred to Baghdad, where they are expected to be executed after undergoing interrogation and torture.

In another development, informed sources said that Saddam Husayn ordered the confiscation of all property belonging to Kamil Hasan al-Majid and his sons and daughters, who were killed along with General Husayn Kamil and his brother Colonel Saddam Kamil, Saddam Husayn's sons-in-law.

Saddam Husayn also ordered the confiscation of the property of tens of relatives of these murdered persons, as well as the property of those who had trade connections with them. The sources added that 'Udayy and Qusayy, Saddam Husayn's sons, seized the confiscated property and funds. [passage omitted]

Iraq: Army Reportedly Attacks Marshland Civilians

JN3003164296 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1315 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In the aftermath of the painful blows dealt to the frightened troops of the Baghdad ruler in southern Iraq at the hands of the mujahidin and revolutionaries in the marshlands and southern governorates, the defeated Saddamist troops carried out hostile campaigns over the past few days against the unarmed civilians and population in several areas affiliated with the al-'Amarah Governorate.

Our sources in southern Iraq stated that the regime's henchmen in the party, security, and intelligence organs attacked residents in the Abu Gharb area in the al-Kahla' District. Before that, they carried out a similar attack against peasants and farmers in the (al-Hakkah) area, and adjacent farmlands, which are affiliated with the al-Kahla' District.

The residents of these areas said that the army units that attacked the population of the marshlands had sustained grave losses at the hands of the Iraqi mujahidin, and that many of their personnel deserted. Under the pretext of searching for army deserters, the Saddamist authorities and services stormed the citizens' houses, displacing women and children after setting their homes and farms ablaze.

Iraq: UNIKOM Post Reportedly Attacked by Iraqi Gunmen

LD3103191196 Kuwait KSC Television in Arabic 1800 GMT 31 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Salim Fahmawi, a spokesman for UN Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission [UNIKOM], announced that on 23 March three Iraqi gunmen had attacked one of the observer posts on the Iraqi side of the border. They looted the post after opening fire on one of the observers and threatening the others. The UN spokesman indicated that the members of the mission did not exchange fire with the armed men, and no one

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was hurt. He added that the attack took place at 0130 in an area 30 km west of the mission headquarters in the city of Umm Qasr city.

In a telephone conversation with REUTER, the UN spokesman said the UN mission had made a protest to Iraq following the incident and was expecting more details.

Iraq: Paper—U.S. Exercising 'Terrorism' Against People

JN3103091296 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0715 GMT 31 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 31 Mar (INA)—The newspaper AL-THAWRAH ridicules the United States' false measures to fight international terrorism.

In an article today, the paper, which speaks for the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, says: It would be wrong for the United States to think that world public opinion will believe its allegations about fighting terrorism, the statements made by its various administrations, or the classifications it makes of the countries that it considers to be terrorist states.

The paper adds: The United States, which pursues state terrorism on an extensive scale and which is responsible for annihilating hundreds of thousands of people in the world through various methods, cannot hide its crimes any longer. Its officials are now facing embarrassing questions from journalists everywhere.

AL-THAWRAH says: It is shameful for the United States to claim that it wants to fight terrorism, that it is the world's superpower, and that it defends human rights and international legitimacy all over the world, while, at the same time, it commits terrorist acts against the people of Iraq, like those that were published by the British newspaper, THE INDEPENDENT. The paper published confessions by a CIA agent who said that official U.S. groups were involved in and sponsored flagrant acts of terror against Iraq. This particular agent was directly instructed by CIA agents to blow up boobytrapped cars in Baghdad, Salah-al-Din, and other parts of Iraq.

The paper says: How can Washington explain these terrorist acts and its interference in the domestic affairs of a founding member of the United Nations?

The paper says: The United States may think that it is above international law and human rights. It may also think that its allegations about its efforts to fight terrorism may conceal the fact that the CIA is implementing and financing scores of terrorist operations that aim to intimidate people in several states, to undermine security and stability in these states, to interfere in their domestic affairs, to change their political systems, and to influence their independent national decisionmaking process.

The paper concludes: When we open the file on U.S. terrorism against Iraq for example, we will need a long time to count the number of the U.S. terrorist acts against the Iraqi people and Iraq's nationalistic political system. The U.S. war of aggression and the unfair embargo are only two examples of the open and constant U.S. terrorism against Iraqi people. The conspiracies that the United States participated in or that it hatched and directed against Iraq are documented and public. The United States' allegations and bragging about its concern for and compliance with human rights and international law are worthless.

Iraq: U.S. 'Conspiracy' Seen in Envoy's Visit to North

JN3103101496 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0745 GMT 31 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 31 Mar (INA)—The newspaper AL- THAWRAH stresses that the new plan that the U.S. Administration is devising to reorganize relations among the warring Kurdish cliques in northern Iraq will not end the fighting among these cliques.

In a news analysis today, AL-THAWRAH says: The U.S. State Department's plan to dispatch Robert Deutsch at the head of a U.S. delegation to northern Iraq to achieve this goal is basically part of a policy that seeks to worsen the tragic conditions in the area.

The paper adds: Everything that has been said about the U.S. Administration's desire for stabilization in the area is only a feeble excuse and a political gimmick. A host of facts and unconcealable evidence, strengthen this opinion. First, the main objective of U.S. foreign policy is to achieve U.S. imperialist interests, regardless of the damage it may cause to people. Second, the Americans have already sent CIA, State Department, and Pentagon envoys to the area controlled by the agent cliques and the situation has only gotten worse.

AL-THAWRAH says: The new envoy's mission coincides with growing American fears that current conditions in northern Iraq are getting worse and may go out of control, considering the growing discontent among the Kurdish people. This fact prompted the Americans to try another mission in anticipation of any event that might run counter to their plans. This is also another conspiracy that coincides with the growing international trend that rejects the embargo and actions that run counter to the aspirations of the Iraqi Kurds, who seek to end the abnormal conditions in the area.

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The paper stresses that the Americans will only be disappointed by their new moves. The paper stresses that the future of the Iraqi Kurds can only be guaranteed by the Iraqi people's unity and by abiding by the principles of national legitimacy, which is realized by the leadership of President Saddam Husayn.

Iraq: Kurdish Parties Refute U.S. House Remarks on Halabjah

JN3003085996 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 29 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Kurdistan Revolutionary Party condemned allegations by the U.S. House of Representatives that Iraq was responsible for the Halabjah incidents in 1988.

In a joint statement issued today, the two parties said that the U.S. Administration, which leads world terrorism, has confirmed its continued aggressive ideology based on conspiracy, repression, persecution, and the attempts at flagrant interference in the internal affairs of free and independent states.

The statement added that these are cowardly desperate attempts designed to abort the liberation movements and spread U.S. political, economic, and military hegemony over the resources of states and peoples by using various forms of falsehoods, deception, and attempts to mislead world public opinion.

The statement said that, at the time, U.S. sources stressed the Iranian regime's responsibility for this crime. Moreover, other international reports, irrevocable evidence, and international testimonies emphasized the Iranian regime's involvement in the Halabjah incidents.

In the name of the honorable Kurds, the statement called on world public opinion, represented by the political parties and the popular, professional, humanitarian, and legal organizations, to denounce and condemn the U.S. House of Representatives' conspiratorial position and enhance solidarity with our people in order to remove all foreign forces from Iraqi Kurdistan and give our Kurdish masses an opportunity to exercise their national rights as part of the unity of the homeland, people, and destiny under the autonomy law.

The statement asserted that since the glorious 17-30 July revolution in 1968, the tyrant U.S. Administration has continued its cruel conspiracy against all the gains and achievements of this great revolution in order to fragment our national unity and return [words indistinct] among the sons of united Iraq.

Iraq: Paper Criticizes 'Hostile' Kuwaiti 'Moves'

JN0104092396 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0715 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 1 Apr (INA)—The newspaper AL- THAWRAH asserts that the frenzied moves against Iraq's security and stability never ceased. Nevertheless, all these multifaceted hostile moves failed to undermine the Iraqi people's steadfastness and patience, the paper says.

In an article today, the paper, which speaks for the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, adds: The malicious moves against Iraq increase whenever the aggressors feel that Iraq took a confident step toward relaxation. Right now, officials in this sensitive and strategically important region, which is rich in natural resources and is the key to smooth relations between East and West and to the interests of both sides, are unanimous on the importance of Iraq's role in guaranteeing the security and stability of the region.

The paper goes on to say: There is concrete evidence that the absence of legitimate authority in the autonomous areas in northern Iraq caused a security deterioration there, not to mention that the security and stability of southeastern Turkey is still in jeopardy despite the stationing of foreign troops codenamed the "Poised Hammer" force there. This force is not well received by the Turkish people, as indicated by the Turkish Government's decision to curtail its new mandate from six to three months.

The paper refers to the recent Kuwaiti moves aimed at interfering in Iraq's domestic affairs and disturbing its security and stability, saying that these moves are part of the field assignments carried out by the Kuwaiti regime for a long time to promote the U.S. conspiratorial scheme against Iraq and its nationalist experience. These moves, which were flagrant this time, coincided with disclosures regarding criminal bombings masterminded by CIA agents in Baghdad and Salah-al-Din. These moves reflect an evil propensity toward Iraq and the Iraqi people, the paper says.

Iraq: Acts by Kuwaiti 'Agents' Protested to Arab League

JN3103155096 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1200 GMT 31 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 31 Mar (INA) — Iraq asserted that the Kuwaiti regime is still determined to cripple any attempt to reach a minimum degree of Arab solidarity.

In a letter delivered today by Dr. Nabil Najm, Iraq's permanent representative to the Arab League, to the

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Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, Iraqi Acting Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Ghani 'Abd-al-Ghafur said: I would like to inform your excellency that the competent Iraqi authorities arrested a group of agents recruited by the intelligence agencies of the Kuwaiti regime to carry out sabotage acts. These acts were intended to disrupt security and stability in the region and were targeted at the personnel of the UN Iraq-Kuwait Observer Mission [UNIKOM] in their headquarters and during their patrols of the Iraqi-Kuwaiti borders.

The Iraqi acting foreign minister added: These agents, who number six, confessed in an interview carried by Iraqi Television on Thursday evening, 28 March, that they were recruited by Kuwaiti Intelligence Officer Muhammad Yusuf al-Kandari to spy on the cargoes of ships coming to Umm Qasr Port. They were also tasked to obtain information about the economic situation in Iraq and other issues. The intelligence agencies of that regime equipped these agents with arms to carry out sabotage and terrorist operations against the UNIKOM personnel, who carry out their duties on the borders between the two countries, with the aim of spurring an anti-Iraq sentiment and holding Iraq responsible for these actions.

'Abd-al-Ghani 'Abd-al-Ghafur added: Some of these agents confessed that they indiscriminately collected the finger prints of a number of Iraq citizens and presented them to the intelligence agencies of the Kuwaiti regime, claiming that they belonged to missing Kuwaiti nationals held in Iraq. Their aim was to give false evidence that such missing people exist in Iraq, despite their knowledge that this is false. In addition, these agents admitted that intelligence officials of the Kuwaiti regime, in cooperation with the CIA, entrusted them with garnering information on the movements, deployment, and weapons of the Republican Guard forces inside the Iraqi territories.

He asserted that the information presented by this group of agents provides strong evidence that the Iraqi regime and its intelligence agencies are involved, along with the CIA, in actions to disrupt security and stability in this country and to interfere in its domestic affairs in contravention of the UN Charter, the Arab League Charter, and the provisions of International Law. This regime should be directly held accountable for any damages caused by the actions of these mercenary agents.

Concluding his letter, the acting foreign minister said: The Government of the Republic of Iraq condemns these vile acts by the Kuwaiti regime. It demands that you intervene to prevent the reoccurrence of these acts. I would like you to distribute this letter among the Arab League member states as an official Arab League document. Please accept our deep respect.

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Israel: U.S. Asked To Help Prevent Escalation on Northern Border

TA3003175596 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 30 Mar 96

[Moti 'Eden video report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Great tension is being reported on the northern border this evening after two Lebanese civilians were killed by IDF [Israel Defense Forces] fire directed at the village of Yatar. Our correspondent Moti 'Eden reports from the north:

[Begin 'Eden recording] Approximately at 1300 GMT, after terrorists were spotted in the area, IDF Cobra helicopters were alerted to the location and an artillery battery opened fire on the target from the western sector. As a result of the bombardment near Yatar, opposite Israel's Shetula and Zar'it, two persons were killed: 'Ali Husayn Ja'far and Fu'ad Hurani. However, from a check I conducted with sources in south Lebanon it comes out that the two are Hizballah terrorists rather than innocent civilians, and that they were standing among a group of armed men. From the area in which the two were killed, sniper and mortar fire was directed last week toward IDF and SLA [South Lebanese Army] positions in south Lebanon's western and central sectors. [end recording]

This evening Israel asked to the United States to act with Syria and Hizballah in a bid to maintain the calm in south Lebanon. Israel said it is not interested in harming civilians. It has been learned that the Americans told the Syrians that the IDF attack on civilians in south Lebanon was a mistake rather than an intentional attack.

[Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew at 1700 GMT on 30 March adds: "Prime Minister Peres is trying to relay a message to Hizballah via the French and the Americans that Israel is interested in calm and that the firing on the village of Yatar, where the Lebanese civilians were killed, was a mistake."

[Correspondent in the north Menahem Horowitz says in a recorded report from the northern border that: "This message was relayed to the Americans this evening after Hizballah leaders announced in Beirut a short time ago they intend to shell the Galilee this evening in retaliation for the death of the two Lebanese civilians in Yatar. Following the reports in Beirut about the deaths of the two Lebanese civilians and the ensuing Hizballah threats, many people in Qiryat Shemona and other northern settlements are spending the night in their shelters and security rooms."]

Israel: IDF Spokeman Reacts to Yatar Incident

TA3003182096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1800 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Hizballah head Hasan Nasrallah says his men will fire rockets at the Galilee to avenge the death of two Lebanese civilians in the village of Yatar. According to reports from south Lebanon today, the two were killed today by IDF [Israel Defense Forces] fire and another civilian was seriously wounded.

The IDF spokesman said in reaction that an IDF force directed fire at a group of armed men moving outside the village of Yatar in an area from which terrorists have carried out attacks in the past and from where fire was directed at IDF and SLA [South Lebanese Army] forces. The spokesman noted that yesterday and today Hizballah men directed fire at IDF and SLA positions and planted roadside bombs along various roads.

In reaction to Nasrallah's threats, military sources said the IDF is doing everything necessary to protect the Galilee. [passage omitted]

Israel: Rockets Hit Northern Israel

NC3003203496 Paris AFP in English 2029 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kiryat Shmona, Israel, March 30 (AFP) — Rockets slammed into northern Israel on Saturday [30 March], only hours after Hizballah guerrillas warned it would avenge the deaths of two civilians killed in Israeli attack, a military spokesman said.

Israel: Galilee Quiet After Katyusha Attack; Talks With U.S. Continue

TA3103045096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0400 GMT 31 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Galilee is quiet following the firing of katyushas at it around midnight last night. Most of the residents spent the night in shelters and security rooms. Our correspondent Ilan Ro'e reports that residents were instructed to continue to remain in the shelters. The katyushas, which were fired at nearly midnight, fell on the western Galilee and the Galilee panhandle. One woman was slightly wounded and received treatment on the spot. Property was slightly damaged.

In reaction, the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] directed heavy shelling at terrorist targets in several areas in southern Lebanon.

Contacts were held between Israel and the United States regarding the escalation in southern Lebanon.

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Our correspondent Gil Litman reports that Foreign Minister Baraq spoke on the telephone with U.S. Secretary Christopher and described to him the course of developments that led to the killing of two Lebanese residents by IDF fire. Minister Baraq noted that this was a glitch, making it clear that Israel takes care to prevent such things. Prime Minister Peres too said last night that the two Lebanese civilians were killed by mistake. Our correspondent reports that Minister Baraq asked Christopher to have the United States exert its influence to prevent a deterioration on the northern border, and the U.S. secretary promised that the United States would appeal to all parties concerned on this matter. Our correspondent says Israeli-U.S. contacts will continue today too to prevent an escalation in the situation.

Our correspondent in Washington Hayim Zissowitz reports that in the wake of the Israeli-U.S. contacts it was reported that the Syrians announced that they are acting to restrain Hizballah, but our Arab affairs correspondent Arye Gus notes that Syria again enables Iran to transfer arms to Hizballah through the Damascus airport.

Israel: Cabinet Meets on Lebanon, Closure, Shamgar Commission

TA3103111296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1005 GMT 31 Mar 96

[Report by Gil Litman — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Litman] The cabinet meeting has ended on a positive note, at least as far as the incidents in the north are concerned. Most importantly, the prime minister informed the ministers of his impression that tension in the north is decreasing thanks to very intensive diplomatic activity, with U.S. mediation, over the weekend. At the beginning of the meeting Shim'on Peres explained the actions adopted by Israel to calm the situation, and if nothing unusual happens, God forbid, Shim'on Peres will take off for Oman and Qatar on a historic visit to these two emirates, with the hope of establishing relations with Qatar. Reference is to an economic representation there, as we already have with Oman.

[Reporting on Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 1000 GMT on 31 March, political correspondent Udi Segal adds that in a briefing to the cabinet on the incident in which two Lebanese civilians were killed, "Peres again said this was a glitch. We did not want to escalate the situation on the eve of Passover, Peres explained, referring to the diplomatic effort made via the United States and Syria."]

The cabinet heard a review by the Finance Ministry's director general and the coordinator of activities in the territories regarding the situation there, especially in the Gaza Strip, five weeks after the imposition of the closure, and decided to establish a ministerial committee headed by Minister Moshe Shahal to look into easing up the closure with regard to the transfer of goods into and from the Gaza Strip. Reference is to basic commodities, medicines, and agricultural produce. We heard Minister 'Uzi Bar'am on this issue.

[Bar'am] There is no easing up with regard to the exit of laborers to Israel. What we should do now is to ease up the import and export of merchandise. Moshe Shahal, Ya'aqov Tzur, and Ori Or need to be at the crossings tomorrow to check and see that this goes well, rapidly, and smoothly.

[Litman] There are four members in this ministerial committee: Ministers Moshe Shahal, Ya'aqov Tzur, and Yosi Sarid, and Deputy Defense Minister Ori Or. [Adding to this, IDF Radio's Udi Segal reports that "the cabinet mandated several measures to alleviate the closure, particularly through the Qarni crossing. Major General Oren Shahor, coordinator of activities in the territories, reported dire distress in the territories as a result of loss of income, but said there is no hunger there. Lieutenant General Amnon Lipkin-Shahaq, chief of staff, said during the discussion that it should be clear that any easing of the closure is risky."]

The cabinet also adopted the conclusions of the Shamgar commission, which looked into the late Prime Minister Rabin's assassination, tasking Maj. Gen. Refa'el Vardi, Reserves, to follow up the implementation of these conclusions.

Israel: Peres Departs for Oman Visit

TA0104074596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0700 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres is currently on his way to the emirate of Oman in the Persian Gulf. He will arrive in the town of Salalah at noon and confer with Sultan Qabus immediately afterward.

Our envoy Gil Litman reports that Energy Minister Gonen Segev joined the prime minister's entourage at the last minute. Major General Dani Yatom is also participating in the visit.

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Israel: Jordanian Chief of Staff Arrives, Meets Officials

JN3103185196 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 31 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] Staff General 'Abd-al-Hafiz Mar'i al-Ka'abinah, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, arrived in Israel today on an official visit. He was received by General Amnon Shahaq, chief of staff of the Israeli Army. Gen. al-Ka'abinah, who arrived on board a helicopter, was accorded an official reception. The Jordanian and Israeli national anthems were played.

Gen. al-Ka'abinah began his talks with Israeli officials by meeting his counterpart Amnon Shahaq. He then met with Shim'on Peres, Israeli prime minister and defense minister.

The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff will resume talks with officials at the Israeli Defense Ministry and will visit several Israeli military bases.

Israel: Hamas Suspec..; Arrested in Hebron, Ramallah

TA0104054096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0500 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] As part of their operations against Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], early this morning the security forces arrested seven men suspected of having engaged in hostile terrorist activities. Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports that the suspects were arrested in the Hebron and Ramallah areas.

A Hamas activist suspected of being involved in the kidnapping and murder of the soldier Nahshon Wachsman in 1994 was detained in the wave of arrests conducted last weekend in the Ramallah area.

Israel: Russia's Primakov Refuses To Meet Baraq; Baraq Denies Report

TA0104081396 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 1 Apr 96 p A1

[Report by Yosi Melman]

[FBIS Translated Text] Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov refuses to invite Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq to Moscow, but has invited Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasir 'Arafat to visit him in April. A report sent by the Israeli Embassy in Moscow to the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem notes that the invitation to 'Arafat is meant to convey Russia's protest against Israel's closure policy in the territories.

Two months ago Baraq approached his Russian counterpart asking for a meeting on either 18 or 21 March, but the Russian Foreign Ministry abstained from giving an answer. Replying to a question by HA'ARETZ in Moscow last week, Minister Primakov said: "I have no plans to meet with the Israeli foreign minister."

The Russian foreign minister added that the meeting he held with Baraq during the Sharm al-Shaykh conference two weeks ago was enough for him. A check conducted by the Foreign Ministry shows that the meeting in question — with the participation of Prime Minister Shim'on Peres, Russian President Boris Yeltsin, and the two foreign ministers — took place in the corridor and lasted only 10 minutes

Diplomatic sources in Moscow noted that Primakov's refusal to confer with his Israeli counterpart "and the humiliating fashion in which this was done are unprecedented and contravene diplomatic conventions." In their opinion, "this was meant to illustrate Russian displeasure with Israel's policy. Russian officials believe that Israel looks down on Russia and minimizes its roles in the peace process."

Minister Baraq wanted to meet his Russian counterpart in view of Jerusalem's concern with the intentions of Primakov (who was appointed to his position a few months ago) to increase Russia's involvement in the peace process in the Middle East. Primakov, who once headed the Middle East Affairs Institute and until recently was the director of Russia's foreign intelligence service, is considered pro-Arab.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0405 GMT on 1 April carries a live telephone interview with Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq by anchorman Arye Golan. Asked to comment on the aforementioned report, Baraq replies: "I have no idea where this report comes from. On the contrary, Primakov sent me a very detailed and interesting letter dealing with a wide variety of problems. I encountered him for the first time in a casual meeting during the Sharm al-Shaykh conference. He has been friendly with 'Arafat and had working relations with him for decades. I am sure that ultimately, sooner or later, we will visit Moscow. I did not ask for an invitation; nor did he refuse it." Asked whether he really did not ask for a meeting on 18 or 21 March, Baraq replies with a categorical "no." To the anchorman's remark that maybe soon he will be able to report on his visit to Moscow, Baraq replies: "I do not know whether this will happen soon. The issue has not yet come up on the agenda in any concrete and practical manner."]

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Israel: Peres, Sarid Say 'Absolutely No Safety Hazard' at Dimona

TA3103150196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1400 GMT 31 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres says the radioactive waste at Dimona's Nuclear Research Center [NRC] is stored safely and according to international standards. In today's cabinet session, Shim'on Peres emphasized there is absolutely no safety hazard to the environment or to the NRC's workers.

Our correspondent Gil Litman reports that also in the session, Environment Minister Yosi Sarid emphasized that over the last six years his ministry has been following the radioactive waste in the Dimona reactor area. These checks have not revealed any finding that would give room for concern. Minister Sarid claims that the Dimona reactor is one of the safest nuclear reactors in the world.

Israel: Peres Decides To Further Ease Closure on Territories

TA0104092896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0900 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres decided to further ease the closure on the territories. Some 3,000 Gazans over the age of 45 will be allowed to work in agriculture in southern Israel. Agriculture Minister Ya'aqov Tzur told our correspondent Shim'on Vilna'i that they will start working during the Passover holiday and that a list of names is being compiled. Minister Tzur noted that the closure will be further eased with regard to the passage of agricultural produce from Gaza to Israel, and that the Qarni crossing will remain open 24 hours a day.

Israel: Shahaq, Shahor Urge Cabinet To Ease Closure, Take Risks

TA0104101096 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 1 Apr 96 p A5

[Report by Aluf Ben]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In its session yesterday, the cabinet decided to alleviate the closure on the territories and to allow the passage of goods to and from the Gaza Strip. The ministers heard briefings by security officials, but no debate took place.

Lieutenant General Amnon Shahaq, chief of staff, told the ministers that "there is a threat that, as a result of the closure, the security situation will become very difficult and support for the Islamic opposition will rise. The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] conclusion is that the situation should be alleviated and the Palestinian Authority [PA] should be helped, with a willingness on our part to take greater security risks, including allowing laborers in." According to Shahaq, "the current situation is risky as well."

Major Gen. Oren Shahor, coordinator of government activities in the territories, told the ministers that there are some 80,000 unemployed persons in the Gaza Strip currently, and that this figure might rise up to 180,000 within a few months, due to the indirect impact of the closure, such as factory shutdowns, and raw material shortages.

Shahor said that the worsening unemployment and distress "will be followed by a terrible strengthening of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and the Islamic Jihad." According to him, the PA is currently making an effort to divert Israeli and international attention from terrorism to the economic distress caused by the closure. "The Palestinians claim that the closure only serves domestic Israeli purposes, mainly on the eve of elections." [passage omitted]

Israel: Revolutionary Guards Said Involved in Hizballah Activity

TA3103182496 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 31 Mar 96

[Talk in the studio between anchor Hayim Yavin and correspondent Ehud Ya'ari]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Yavin] The United States has relayed to Israel promises from Syria saying that the firing of katyushas on the Galilee by Hizballah will not be resumed. Hizballah leaders, however, continue to threaten that if the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] operates in south Lebanon they will fire more katyushas. Ehud Ya'ari, what are the chances of the katyusha attacks being resumed?

[Ya'ari] At present there is a promise of sorts — of the kind we have received in the past and that have never been fully fulfilled — that Hizballah will not initiate further katyusha attacks. This promise was made by Syria. We have to note that what we have here is a sort of balance of fear that somewhat leans in Hizballah's favor, because it now looks like an organization that provides automatic protection to every Lebanese civilian in south Lebanon.

[Yavin] And it is also holding our northern residents hostage.

[Ya'ari] That is true. Israel has also apologized and explained that this sort of thing can happen when the IDF directs its fire in the general direction of where the firing came from — as the commander of the Northern Command said a short time ago.

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Let me raise two more points here. One, Hizballah is in a process of intentional escalation which is being encouraged by Iran. It is frequently preparing katyusha ambushes — namely, Hizballah men deploy their katyushas on the ground, provoke the IDF into firing on villages and injuring civilians, and then they are prepared to immediately retaliate with the katyushas. Another phenomenon we notice in the region since last December is a much deeper involvement by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards in Hizballah's ongoing activity in the security zone and along our northern border. In fact, the guards are involved in everything from preparation, intelligence, interrogation, instruction — everything except for actually carrying out the operations along with the Hizballah men. [passage omitted]

[Yavin] Ehud, apparently the U.S. political involvement with Syria and the latter's efforts with Hizballah have born fruit, since the prime minister has decided to go on with his visit to Oman — even though he initially considered canceling it.

[Ya'ari] The Syrians say they are putting an end to the katyusha attacks and not necessarily to other forms of Hizballah activity in the security zone. This promise indeed seems serious and therefore, barring any last-minute changes, the prime minister will make the first open visit by an Israeli prime minister to the Persian Gulf countries Oman and Qatar. [passage omitted]

Israel: Deputy Defense Minister, Likud on Situation in North

TA3103062596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0600 GMT 31 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The residents of the north have been notified that they can leave the shelters and security rooms. This was stated by Deputy Defense Minister Ori Or. 'Amiram Levin, commander of the Northern Command, said that the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] will react in the north according to developments in the area. Maj. Gen. Levin said it is not yet clear to the IDF whether the two Lebanese killed in Yatar yesterday were civilians or terrorists, and a debriefing is being conducted. Our correspondent Ilan Ro'e reports that the commander of the Northern Command said he has not heard of any Israeli apology on the matter. Maj. Gen. Levin said this to reporters during a visit to Qiryat Shemona. [passage omitted]

Deputy Defense Minister Ori Or added that Israel notes and remembers everything that takes place in southern Lebanon. We have a good memory, Or emphasized, and we made our position clear to all concerned, including Syria. At the same time, people in the area will not dictate to Israel its moves in the region. The deputy defense minister stressed that Israel aims at maintaining quiet on the northern border and does not want to wage a war there. Regarding the two Lebanese killed in the security zone, Ori Or says this may be a mistake, but one cannot come with complaints to the IDF since there are numerous incidents in the area and errors may occur.

The Likud released an announcement on incidents in the north, stating among other things that in response to terror we should not rely on Syria as we do on 'Arafat, but rather allow the IDF freedom of action.

Israel: Peres Sees Peace Process in 'Transitory Phase'

AU0104104496 Munich FOCUS in German 1 Apr 96 p 286

[Interview with Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres by David Frost; place and date not given: "A Real Shock"]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Frost] Prime Minister, do you still think the peace process is irreversible?

[Peres] Yes. I think we are going through a transitory phase. The old Middle East has not quite disappeared, and the new one has not quite materialized. We still have the old concepts and the old conduct, but we have already achieved a partial opening.

By opening I mean this: This is the first time in 100 years that the Palestinians are combating Palestinian crime.

[Frost] Can the new Middle East stand the Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] suicide bombings? You said you have swallowed the latest attacks.

[Peres] It was extraordinarily difficult to get over them. On a Sunday morning at 0630, the news was that a bomb had exploded in a bus and dozens of people had been killed. That was a real shock. Some of my friends thought we would never get over it. But we did. I hope it never happens again, but deep in my heart I know that nothing in the world encourages terrorists more than a hysterical response.

[Frost] The Palestinians have taken up the struggle against the terrorists. Is 'Arafat giving his best?

[Peres] Yes, although there are no limits on what is best. He has been making a serious attempt over the past three weeks.

[Frost] You want to keep the autonomous areas sealed off until the danger of terror is past. How long will this last? May, June?

[Peres] The barricade might be lifted sooner. It depends on the success of the Palestinian police, whether they catch the ringleaders.

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[Frost] Looking ahead to 30 or 40 years time, will the Israelis and Arabs live in peace together?

[Peres] We will live together like the British and French. Memories of history will remain, but no struggle, no hatred, no killing. We will cooperate economically. The areas should be separated, but with open borders.

[Frost] Which country is the biggest threat to Israel's future, Iran or Iraq?

[Peres] Iran is the biggest threat to everyone, not just Israel. In Iran we see an unheard-of combination — an evil, extremely religious movement that has the possibility of acquiring the nuclear bomb. What would have happened if Hitler had had a nuclear bomb?

[Frost] What should the West do?

[Peres] First, establish a coalition that recognizes this danger. A few European countries are still flirting with Iran. They call it critical dialogue. I do not think we have to resort to military means in order to make an impression on Iran. A coalition applying economic pressure should be enough for the time being.

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Jordan: Parties Urge Firm Iraq Ties, Oppose U.S. Military Action

JN2903121496 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0805 GMT 29 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, 29 Mar (INA) — The Jordanian National Front [JNF], which comprises the Jordanian National Alliance, Progress and Justice, al-Yaqazah, and al-Watan parties, has emphasized the importance of maintaining Jordan's relations with Iraq the way they were in the past, especially since these relations affect socioeconomic conditions in Jordan.

In a statement, the JNF said that Iraq's support for Jordan deserves appreciation, adding that the same appreciation goes to the Jordanian leadership's and people's support for Iraq during the difficult times when Jordan was Iraq's only gateway and when the Jordanians stood by their Iraqi brothers, extending all the assistance they could muster.

The front said: Today, Iraq is living the tragedy of the embargo and starvation. Its children, women, and elderly people are deprived of the simplest means of living. Iraq is in dire need of a decisive Arab stand in support of its right to maintain its unity and to lift the siege on its land and people. Any call or action that transcends these issues and talks about the shape that people would like Iraq to have, with no reference to other ideas about this shape, is a call for interfering in the affairs of an Arab country and will have destructive effects on the [Arab] nation in the future. [sentence as received]

The JNF said that allowing U.S. Air Force planes to take off from Jordanian territory is a new link in a series, and that only God knows what the effects of this series will be and when it will end. We do not approve of using Arab territory, in general, and Jordanian territory, in particular, as a springboard for aggression or threats to any Arab country regardless, of the causes or justifications.

The other Jordanian political parties have already emphasized the importance of Iraqi-Jordanian relations to serve the Arab nation's interests, especially the interests of the two fraternal peoples. They also stressed the need to refrain from interfering in Iraq's internal affairs, because this interference reflects on all aspects of the Jordanian people's interests, particularly the economic ones.

Jordan: National Front Statement on Iraq, U.S. Military Action

JN2903202696 Amman AL-AHALI in Arabic 28 Mar 96 p 3

[FBIS Translated Text] The Jordanian National Front, which comprises the Jordanian National Alliance, Progress and Justice, al-Yaqazah, and al-Watan parties issued a statement on the Jordanian-Iraqi relations and the latest developments in this respect.

The statement emphasized that Jordan's relations with the sisterly Arab countries are based on fraternity, joint cooperation, and noninterference in internal affairs. These relations are also based on overcoming transient differences and providing an atmosphere of harmony and accord. This is a sound policy that was appreciated and clearly manifested during the Gulf war and the Iraqi occupation of the State of Kuwait, when Jordan opposed the occupation and called for an Arab solution to avoid the destructive effects of war, deterioration in the Arab economy, and deepening of Arab conflicts.

The statement said: Our relations with the brothers in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states are based on these principles, and we should restore the shining and pure picture of these relations on the basis of mutual cooperation and respect, and we appreciate the official efforts being made toward this end.

The four Jordanian parties emphasized: Our relations with sisterly Iraq should be within the same framework as they used to be, especially since these relations have a major impact on socioeconomic conditions in Jordan. Iraq's support for Jordan deserves appreciation, and the same appreciation goes to the Jordanian leadership and people's support for Iraq during the difficult times when Jordan was Iraq's only gateway and when the Jordanians stood by their Iraqi brothers, extending all possible assistance to them .

The statement adds: Today, Iraq is living the tragedy of the embargo and starvation. Its children, women, and elderly people are deprived of the simplest means of living. Iraq is experiencing fragmentation and interference in its affairs. Therefore, Iraq is in dire need of a decisive Arab stand in support of its right to maintain its unity and to lift the siege on its land and people. Any call or action that transcends these issues and talks about the shape that people would like the Iraqi regime to have, without reference to the shape of other countries' regimes violates the limits of the sound Jordanian policy and is a call for interfering in the affairs of an Arab country that will have destructive effects on the [Arab] nation in the future. Allowing U.S. Air Force planes to take off from Jordanian territory is a new link

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in a series that only God knows what the effects of this series will be and when it will end. We do not approve of using Arab territory, in general, and Jordanian territory, in particular, as a springboard for aggression or threats against any Arab country regardless, of the causes or justifications.

We call for returning Jordanian policy to its sound framework that genuinely represents our people—a policy that keeps our people away from frustration and chaos, preserves the unity of the people behind their people, and prevents the fragmentation of the internal front in face of interference and domination.

The statement emphasized that balanced Arab relations guarantee an effective Jordanian role, restore unity to the Arab fold, and protect the Arab right and what has been usurped of that right. Any defect in these relations will have a high price, particularly for Jordan, in light of the current circumstances and the changes taking place in the region.

Jordan: Iraqi National Accord Announces Opening of Amman Office

JN3003103496 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 30 Mar 96 pp 18, 7

[Report by P.V. Vivekanand]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Amman—The Iraqi National Accord, an exile group opposed to the regime of President Saddam Husayn, has opened an office in Amman vowing to "fight against dictatorship" and achieve the "national aspirations" of the people of Iraq.

It is the first time that an Iraqi dissident group has been allowed to set up formal presence in Jordan in the wake of Jordanian criticism of the policies of the Iraqi government and the Kingdom's calls for an end to the suffering of the Iraqi people.

Jordanian officials said in February that the Kingdom was willing to host such an office if permission was sought but subject to certain conditions.

Information Minister Marwan al-Mu'ashshir on Friday [29 March] reiterated the Kingdom's policy that it would allow the presence of Iraqi dissident groups "on a case-by-case basis" rather than a blanket permission for exile factions to operate out of its territory.

One precondition, Dr. al-Mu'ashshir told the JORDAN TIMES, is the no group undertakes military operations from the Kingdom's territory.

The group "can set up political and information office but we will not permit them to undertake military operations," Dr. al- Mu'ashshir told the JORDAN TIMES.

The announcement by the Iraqi National Accord that it was opening an office in Amman came four days after Jordan expelled an Iraqi diplomat and Baghdad, in apparent retaliation, ordered out a Jordanian administrator from the Kingdom's embassy in the Iraqi capital.

Another Iraqi diplomat left Amman one day after the announcement of the expulsion, but officials said they had asked for his departure.

In the meantime, Nizar al-Khazraji, a former general and chief of staff of the Iraqi army who defected two weeks ago, remained incommunicado in Amman after arriving here on March 22.

The government said it was granting the general permission to enter the Kingdom, and, presumably, to stay here, but that it had not given him political asylum.

Iraqi sources said the general, a Shi'ite from southern Iraq, was in touch with other Iraqi exile groups in what Iraq watchers said was a bid to sound them out in terms of their evaluation of the man a credible opponent of the regime of Saddam Husayn.

The sources said Gen. al-Khazraji, who has not spoken to the press after his arrival here, would soon make a "public appearance and adopt a public position" against the Baghdad regime. The Iraqi National Accord said in a statement early last week that it welcomed the general's defection, which, it asserted, was another indication of the gaining strength of the opponents of the regime.

That statement implied that Gen. al-Khazraji was one of its sympathisers.

In a two-page statement issued on Thursday announcing the opening of an office in Amman, the Iraqi National Accord, which says it was set up in 1991 in northern Iraq which is out of Baghdad's control, said it would use the base in Jordan to seek a "new dawn of democracy in Iraq."

The Iraqi National Accord, which maintains an office in London and a radio station in Kurdish-controlled northern Iraq, says most of its members are former officers in the Iraqi armed forces and from various government ministries and departments in Baghdad who have been disenchanted with the policies of the regime.

"The Iraqi National Accord...will challenge the regime of dictatorship in Iraq," said the statement, accusing the Iraqi government of making the people of Iraq suffer and neglecting Iraq's traditions.

"For the first time, the women of Iraq are suffering from collective punishment" imposed by the regime, it said, referring to problems faced by the people of Iraq as a result of sweeping international sanctions imposed on

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the country following its invasion of Kuwait in 1990. It said the group's objective was bring about freedom and democracy for the people of Iraq.

It called on His Majesty King Husayn to help alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people.

"We announce to all Iraqi national opposition and to all Arab brethren that the base of the Iraqi National Accord is their base and they can use it to achieve their objective of bringing about change in Iraq," said the statement.

"We call upon all our comrade groups to offer more sacrifice and join hands," it said. [passage omitted]

Jordan: Iraq Warns Against Border Drilling, Recalls Diplomats

MM0104114596 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 31 Mar 96 pp 1, 4

[Unattributed report: "Iraq Warns Jordan Against Drilling in Border Areas"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — Authoritative Jordanian sources in Amman have said that Iraq has warned Jordan against going ahead with plans for drilling wells to prospect for oil and gas in the al-Rishah [as published] area on the border with Iraq. The sources told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that Iraq warned Jordan that the drilling operations could cause a leakage of Iraqi oil to this area.

The sources said that an Iraqi delegation including foreign and interior ministrY officials secretly visited Amman and conveyed the warning. The delegation also conveyed to Jordanian officials Baghdad's desire "not to get involved in the campaigns waged by Iraq's enemies, and that Iraq wishes Jordan to remain stable and prosperous, while the others are pushing it to the brink of disaster."

The delegation explained that the Iraqi al-Anbar Governorate's geological tilt toward Jordan could cause oil and gas leaks from Iraqi territory, a matter which requires Jordan to stop the drilling operations for oil and gas in the border areas.

The sources said that the delegation raised the issue of Jordan's intention to set up a camp for Iraqis in the Jordanian al-Azraq area, close to Amman, following the increase in the numbers of those fleeing from the government in Iraq to Jordan.

Observers say that the recent increase in tension in Jordanian- Iraqi relations indicates that these relations will deteriorate further in the days to come and could cause both sides to escalate matters, forcing Jordan to close the borders.

Jordanian experts said that U.S. companies are drilling for oil in that region, especially the U.S. company Global, in conjunction with the Jordanian national oil company. Vast quantities were discovered, but the current pumping level is aimed at obtaining quantities for local consumption and not for export.

They added that the Jordanian drilling area is situated near the Iraqi borders, with one of the wells only 225 meters from the border. Jordan recovered areas from Iraq by virtue of the border demarcation agreement ratified two years ago by the two countries.

Jordan has intensified surveillance along the 180 km border with Iraq, while the area that Jordan recovered from Iraq by virtue of the border demarcation agreement is some 73 kms wide and part of the drilling area. Despite reports of tension between the two countries and Iraqi threats concerning the drilling, Iraq reaffirmed yesterday to Jordan that it is committed to the oil export agreement to Jordan. This came in a telephone conversation between Jordanian Energy and Mineral Wealth Minister Dr. Hashim al-Dabbas and Iraqi Oil Minister 'Amir Muhammad Rashid.

Relations between the two countries have witnessed reciprocal expulsions of diplomats, with Jordan expelling an Iraqi diplomat, accusing him of violating diplomatic ethics, and Iraq reciprocating by expelling a senior employee in the Jordanian Embassy in Baghdad. There is even the prospect of mutual closure of the two countries embassies and perhaps the borders.

Two days ago, Iraq recalled Salim 'Abd-al-Husayn Salim al- Rubay'i, a senior official at its embassy in Amman. Informed Iraqi sources which announced this yesterday, said that Iraq has also decided to recall Muhammad al-Fahham, another embassy official.

The sources explained that al-Rubay'i is also the Iraqi consul at the embassy, while Muhammad al-Fahham is the assistant commercial attache in the embassy.

An Iraqi Embassy diplomatic source contacted by AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT has confirmed that al-Rubay'i left Amman for Baghdad.

Jordan: Israeli Minister Confirms Dimona Facility 'Safe'

JN2903215196 Amman Jordan Television Network in English 2000 GMT 29 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report over video from the "News at Ten" program]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Israel confirmed today that there is no danger of environmental contamination, pollution of water resources, and hazards on health

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resulting from nuclear waste disposal techniques at the Dimona facility in southern Israel.

The confirmation came in a letter to His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hasan, the regent, from Israeli Environment Minister Yosi Sarid. Sarid also affirmed what he mentioned to his highness on the phone yesterday that the site of the nuclear disposal waste near Dimona facility is safe. Sarid said that his ministry is making regular tests on air, water, and land outside the nuclear facilities and has not found any leak, which might threaten the population.

Israeli Television reported on Sunday [24 March] that tonnes of radioactive waste are stored in 30-year old containers at the Dimona facility above a large aquifer in the Negev desert and that there was a danger of a leakage. Israeli officials interviewed by Israel TV have played down the contamination danger at Dimona.

Jordan: Government 'Satisfied' by Israel's Assurances on Dimona

JN3003111596 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 30 Mar 96 pp 1, 7

[Report by P.V. Vivekanand]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—A Royal Court spokesman said Friday [29 March] Jordan was satisfied with an Israeli assurance that the Jewish state's nuclear facilities did not pose an environment hazard to any of its neighbours and that the Kingdom was continuing contacts in this regard.

The spokesman, who did not want to be identified, made the statement one day after His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hasan, the Regent, received a message addressed to him personally from Israeli Environment Minister Yosi Sarid.

The message, a copy of which was made available to the JORDAN TIMES, assured the Regent that Israel's Dimona reactor in the desert or any other Israeli nuclear facility does not pose any health hazard and that reports of a radiation leak at Dimona were "baseless speculations and sensational media reporting."

"We are satisfied with the Israeli assurance," said the Royal Court spokesman, "and we are continuing our liaison in this regard."

It was the first known Israeli assurance to Jordan after reports surfaced last week that radioactivity was suspected in southern Jordan as well as Israel's border with Egypt, prompting the Cairo government to dispatch experts to carry out tests on soil in the area and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) to request an urgent Arab League meeting on the issue.

Reports of radioactivity in the vicinity of Dimona have appeared in the Israeli press off and on, but it was the first time that such a report created an uproar, which followed an intense Egyptian campaign against Israel last year to force the Jewish state to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and open its nuclear facilities for international inspection.

The report, which came in a documentary screened by Israeli television and which sparked concern in southern Jordan residents who live much closer to the Dimona facility than Egyptians, prompted Crown Prince Hasan to personally contact Mr. Sarid, who promised him a full report on the affair.

Mr. Sarid's message, which was dated March 28 and came in fulfillment of his promise to the Regent, reflected the warmth in relations between Jordan and Israel following the signing of a peace treaty between the two countries in October 1994.

Mr. Sarid, who leads the Meretz party which is a coalition party with Prime Minister Shim'on Peres' Labour in the Israeli government, gave the Israeli government's as well his personal and explicit assurance to the Regent that "neither the Israeli research reactors nor the disposal of radioactive waste pollute in any way the environment or any water resource and do not constitute a health hazard."

"This statement holds true not only as far as the well-being of Israel is concerned, but also that all our neighbouring countries," said the two-page letter. "May I assure you that I can personally vouch for this."

Following is the full text of the message:

Your Highness,

I am taking the liberty of writing in response to concerns raised by certain of our neighbouring states in the wake of the Israeli television programme "Mabat Shen" regarding the safety of the radioactive waste site near Dimona.

As you know, both of our countries are open societies with a vigorous public debate, on practically every issue. The nuclear safety issue is no exception. We consider it perfectly legitimate for the media to inquire about issues of the environmental impact of nuclear activity. These concerns were fully and satisfactorily addressed by the appropriate authorities.

Permit me to reassure you, on behalf of the government of Israel, that neither the Israeli research reactors nor the disposal of radioactive waste, pollute in any way the environment or any water resources, and do not constitute a health hazard. This statement holds true not

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only as far as the well-being of Israel is concerned, but also that of all our neighbouring countries. May I assure you that I can personally vouch for this.

The Ministry of Environment monitors regularly the air, water and ground outside the permitter of the nuclear centres, and to this day no radioactive leakage endangering the population has been detected.

The Israeli Atomic Energy Commission constant and comprehensive monitoring inside the perimeter of its nuclear centres ensures the same results.

In the near past I have personally led on two separate occasions public visits to the nuclear research centre Negev's vicinity and the results of the monitoring on the spot were excellent. In July 1994 I stated in the Knesset the following: "Our reactor in Dimona is one of the safest of its kind; It is well maintained and controlled according to the highest international criteria. There has never been any radioactive leakage or environmental contamination."

Moreover, I would like to emphasise that both our research reactors are of low thermal capacity, and that their safety record has been unimpeachable.

I can assure you, that had any event occurred that would have aroused concern, you would have been fully and immediately informed, not in the least as Israel is a signatory for the relevant international conventions. Unfortunately, baseless speculations and sensational media reporting about "radiation leakages" that never occurred are used again and again to scare people and disturb harmony.

In conclusion, let me again assure that the government of Israel spares no effort in order to ensure the safety of the population and the protection of the environment.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Jordan Backs Palestinian Call For Arab League Meeting on Dimona

JN3103175596 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 31 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Jordan agreed to Palestine's request to hold an emergency Arab League Council meeting at the level of permanent envoys to discuss the dangers of a possible nuclear disaster from the Israeli Dimona reactor in the Negev desert.

Nayif al-Qadi, the Kingdom's ambassador in Cairo and its permanent delegate to the Arab League, said that Jordan would not fail to join any Arab accord. [passage omitted]

Jordan: Al-Kabariti Tells Cabinet 'No Danger' From Dimona Reactor

JN3003214096 Amman Jordan Television Network in English 2000 GMT 30 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report over video from the "News at Ten" program]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The government of Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti has reaffirmed that no radioactivity leakage or contamination of water have been detected in Jordan.

There have been reports of a possible danger from the Israeli Dimona reactor, but the Israeli environment minister yesterday told Jordan that there is no danger, and that the site of the nuclear waste facility is safe.

Information Minister Marwan al-Mu'ashshir said the cabinet discussed the issue at its meeting today, and was assured that no such leakage has been detected in the country.

During its meeting, the cabinet agreed to retire Major General al-Sharif Fawwaz al-Zabn [commander of Bedouin Border Police], and the Civil Defense Director Lieutenant General 'Afif al-Ghul, each upon his request. y Dr. al-Mu'ashshir said Major General Dhib al-Ma'ani has been appointed as the new Civil Defense chief. The cabinet also appointed 'Awni Ibrahim Ilyas as the director of the Civil Status and Passports Department.

The information minister said the cabinet has authorized the energy minister to sign a memorandum of understanding with the American Enron Corporation to build 300 million dollar project to store Qatari liquid gas in al-'Aqabah. [video shows al-Mu'ashshir speaking]

Jordan: House Urges 'Immediate Halt' to Israel's 'Inhumane' Methods

JN3003174996 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The House of Representatives today issued a statement in which it condemned the siege and closure imposed by Israel on the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The statement said the House is following with deep concern the reports about the closure, siege, repression, and collective punishment practiced by the Israeli authorities against the Palestinian citizens in the West Bank and Gaza Strp. These practices began to increase recently and were accompanied by statements showing an inclination to return to the policy of arbitrary individual and collective deportation.

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The statement said: The House of Representatives condemns these measures and practices, which conflict with the simplest principles of human rights and international agreements and resolutions. They also conflict with the principles and bases of the peace process and the global efforts to encourage moves toward achieving comprehensive, just, and lasting peace in the region. The House calls for an immediate halt to these inhumane practices. It also calls for practical recognition of the rights of the Palestinian Arab people on their national soil, headed by their right to establish their independent state whose capital is Jerusalem, and for not obstructing their march while they continue their efforts to build their national establishments in the form they decide and in accordance with their national will.

The statement said: The House of Representatives announces anew its full rejection and strong condemnation of the deportation policy, and emphasizes the Palestinian citizens' right to live freely and honorably on the Palestinian land, protected from the arbitrary deportation policy and other repressive practices under the pretext of Israeli security at a time when such Israeli practices and policies only sow feelings of hatred and frustration, with all the adverse results of such a situation.

The House of Representatives calls on Arab governments to intensify their efforts in cooperation with all international parties concerned to secure an end to the Israeli repressive policies against the Palestinian brothers in the Palestinian territories.

Jordan: Islamic Action Front Reportedly Facing Internal Split

JN3003124696 Amman THE STAR in English 30 Mar-3 Apr 96 pp 1-2

[Report by Ra'id al-'Abid]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The General Secretary of the Islamic Action Front (IAF) has played down recent indications of a possible split within the Islamist party and said that the majority of members still adhere to party rules. Dr. Ishaq al-Farhan told THE STAR that his party will not be affected by the resignation of one member, possibly two, and that "the real issue was not whether one or two Islamist deputies violate our rules or are dismissed by the party, because 99 percent of the members still adhere to it's rules."

But such statements cannot hide the fact that the IAF is facing an internal problem triggered off by the performance of three of its 17 Lower House deputies during last month's vote of confidence on Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti's policy statement. The three members are Dr. Dhib 'Abdallah, Ahmad al-Kasasbah and 'Abdallah al-'Akayilah.

Dr. al-Farhan confirmed that the three deputies are under questioning by the executive committee of the IAF, but denied reports that the party had dismissed or suspended any of its members. He added that the IAF accepted the resignation of deputy al-Kasasbah who announced his resignation from the party during last Sunday's Lower House session.

"Party membership is voluntary and should be practiced by those who believe in the principles of the party and adhere to its rules and decision," Dr. al-Farhan said.

Since the IAF dismissed Mr. Ziyad Abu-Ghunaymah two years ago, the party records showed no other expulsions or resignations. But observers believe the latest developments point to cracks in the body of the largest and most organized party in Jordan.

Deputy Dhib 'Abdallah, who voted for the al-Kabariti government, violating the party's decision, explained that he voted for the government because it was in the interest of his district.

Dr. 'Abdallah, who enjoys sizable support in the eastern suburbs of Amman, was concerned about his future among the ranks of the IAF. The human rights activist, who violated the IAF. The human rights activist, who violated the IAF decision and ran as an independent in the 1993 elections, told THE STAR that "to be in the IAF or outside it makes no difference to me—we all serve Islam."

He expressed his bitterness over what he called "the repression of the executive committee of the Muslim Brotherhood" which imposed its decision on the IAF to vote against the government, after the Islamic deputies had agreed earlier to abstain. "Such behavior (from the Muslim Brotherhood) oppressed the Islamist deputies and stripped them of their power. "This was the reason behind the resignation of al-Kasasbah," 'Abdallah said.

But Dr. al-Farhan said giving one's vote should not be a bargaining matter. "The deputy is not a mayor and he is not a servant of his district, but he represents the Ummah [the nation] in general," he said.

Jordan's Islamist movement represented by the Muslim brotherhood and its political arm, the IAF, refused earlier offers to join the al-Kabariti cabinet. The idea of joining a government that deals with Israel has become a controversial issue for the Islamists for many months. The IAF, which opposes the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, believes the al-Kabariti government was appointed to implement the requisites of the treaty. In addition, the IAF disagrees with the government over its Iraq policy and has declared its opposition to the planned Jordanian-American joint military manoeuvres.

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But the IAF has been careful to avoid direct clash with the al- Kabariti government. Some members even praised al-Kabariti for his "new style" in government which they say differs from previous ones, particularly on the local front.

Al-Kabariti's recent statements on employment policies, public freedoms, professional associations and the press have earned him much respect among the traditional political opposition. "We view these policies positively and hope they will continue," Dr. al- Farhan said. "We will cooperate with the government to implement these local policies."

About half of the IAF is dominated by Muslim Brotherhood activists including the head of the party, Dr. al-Farhan, and the majority of its leadership. The Muslim Brotherhood movement is the party that took the decision to form the IAF as a political arm to participate in Jordanian political life in 1989.

Former member of the IAF and the Muslim brotherhood, Abu- Ghunaymah told THE STAR that "the movement imposed two conditions to accept the establishment of the IAF: the Shura council of the movement had the right to decide on crucial issues of the party, like the parliamentary elections and the vote of confidence, and the Brotherhood had the right to assign the general secretary for the IAF."

Abu-Ghunaymah confirmed that his dismissal from the IAF was for personal differences with Dr. al-Farhan. He said the IAF "will witness more cracks in its body, because of the superior and factional mentality of the IAF leadership."

He added that the IAF's popularity was declining and that this was "proved by the recent problems with al-Kasasbah and 'Abdallah."

Dr. al-Farhan defended his party and rejected criticisms that it is another face of the Muslim Brotherhood movement. He said it was no secret "that more than half of the IAF members, including myself, are Brotherhood members." But he added that the party was open to all, disclosing that the IAF and prominent columnist George Haddad were negotiating about his joining the ranks of the party. "The IAF has no problem accepting Christians within its ranks," Dr. al-Farhan said.

Jordan: Paper Claims U.S. Warning Base To Be Established in Jordan

NC3003125896 Cairo AL-SHA'B in Arabic 26 Mar 96 p 1

[Report by Mahmud Bakri]

[FBIS Translated Text] The U.S. Administration has decided to set up an early warning security base in Jordan. It has begun important contacts with a number of other regional countries to set up early warning stations on their territory under the pretext of combating "terrorism." According to information, the establishment of these bases is under the joint supervision of the CIA and the Pentagon. Certain CIA officials will design these bases as strong effective branches in the region. This is the first time that the CIA has tried to set up official centers to exercise its activities with the approval of the governments of these countries.

A CIA memorandum earlier claimed that the objective of these centers is to chase and hunt down all "terrorist" individuals, particularly the religious ones. According to information, the United States obtained an initial approval of the Jordanian government to establish these centers and that it has held contacts with several other Arab countries, but that the latter contacts have not yet resulted in specific results. These centers will be provided with modern warning systems to follow up and monitor any unusual developments in the countries of the region. President Bill Clinton raised this issue with a number of Arab heads of state, but several of them stressed that this issue needs careful consideration.

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Lebanon: Hizballah Claims Rocket Attack on Northern Israel

NC3003214096 Paris AFP in English 2114 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Beirut, March 30 (AFP) — The Iranian-backed Hizballah militants on Saturday [30 March] claimed a rocket attack on northern Israel, saying it was carried out to avenge the deaths of two Lebanese civilians.

A spokesman for the group told AFP its armed wing the Islamic Resistance had "fired several rockets on the north of Palestine."

Hizballah leader Shaykh Hasan Nasrallah earlier warned the group would attack northern Israel in revenge for the deaths of two civilians, killed by an Israeli tank shell in the Lebanese village of Yater.

An Israeli military spokesman said several Katyusha rockets fell on northern Israel causing no casualties.

Israel radio reported residents living along the border with Lebanon had sought refuge in the shelters after the Hizballah warning.

[Paris AFP in English at 2129 GMT on 30 March says, in a Tyre-datelined report: "Iranian-backed Hizballah guerrillas sent a second salvo of 18 Katyusha rockets slamming into northern Israel late Saturday, Lebanese security services said."]

Lebanon: Israeli Artillery Retaliates for Rocketing of North Israel

NC3003214396 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 2115 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A spokesman for Hizballah has told AFP that the Islamic Resistance has fired a number of rockets at northern Israel in revenge for the death of two civilians by an Israeli tank shell in south Lebanon. [passage omitted]

At 2220 [2020 GMT] this evening, the outskirts of Majdal Silm, Khirbat Silm, and al-Sawwanah came under heavy and concentrated bombardment by the Israeli 155-mm field artillery. The shelling later expanded to include Kafra, Yatar, Haddatah, 'Ayta al-Jabal, Haris, and al-Hinniyah.

Lebanon: Israeli Overflights, Shelling Reported in South

NC3103061996 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0430 GMT 31 Mar 96

[Report by correspondent Qasim Safa in Tyre — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] Tension prevailed in the south in the wake of the Israeli attacks that left two people dead and a third wounded in Yatar yesterday evening. At 2330, Israeli forces bombarded the townships of Kafra, Yatar, Zibqin, al-Mansuri, and Majdal Zun in the western sector. During the 90-minute bombardment, well over 60 shells landed on the towns. Israeli helicopters, warplanes, and reconnaissance planes conducted intensive low-altitude sorties, drawing antiaircraft fire from the Lebanese Army.

Elsewhere, knowledgeable sources said today that the outskirts of most of the villages adjacent to the occupied areas were raked by Israeli helicopters. The resistance pounded areas in occupied Palestine with several katyusha rockets at around 2315 yesterday. The Islamic Resistance issued a statement in this regard.

Furthermore, security sources said that the areas of Shaqra, Haddathah, and Bra'shit in the central sector were subjected to 82-mm mortar fire at 0600 today. The resistance and civil defense teams are currently on alert. The sources added that stringent precautionary measures have been adopted inside the occupied territories. The Israelis set up fixed and mobile roadblocks at the entrances of villages and towns inside the border strip.

The Amal Movement issued a statement announcing the death of the two martyrs. The statement said that the funeral of the two martyrs will be held in Tyre at 0900 today.

Lebanon: Islamic Resistance Issues Statement on Rocket Attacks

NC3103064496 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0530 GMT 31 Mar 96

[Report by correspondent Samir 'Alami — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Zionist occupation forces committed an ugly crime against defenseless citizens in Yatar yesterday afternoon. Two people were martyred and a third was injured. This crime was avenged by rocket attacks by the Islamic Resistance on Zionist settlements causing casualties and extensive physical damage to buildings according to the enemy radio this morning.

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The Islamic Resistance issued a statement on the rocket attacks that were carried out in retaliation for the enemy's abominable crime. The statement says: Out of allegiance to our steadfast kin in the villages of steadfastness and confrontation, in defense of their security against the Zionist enemy's terrorism and vile acts, and in retaliation for the detestable crime committed by the blood-stained hands of the Zionist invaders, the rocket unit of the Islamic Resistance fired three salvos of katyusha rockets at the settlements of Nahariyya, Safad, and Qiryat Shemona in occupied Palestine between 2200 and 2230 last night. The rocket attacks have shattered the enemy's security and reiterated the Islamic Resistance's declaration to defend the Lebanese civilians against the Zionist treachery and to give the enemy an eloquent lesson that the hands of the resistance will remain long enough to deal blows to the enemy's settlements that were constructed through terrorism and bloodshed. [passage omitted]

The statement added that the Islamic Resistance's action last night does not represent the full response to the hideous crime. It asserts that it is its right to retaliate at the appropriate time because we are facing an enemy that is only deterred by force. The Islamic Resistance warns the enemy against committing any foolish act. It restates the pledge to all our steadfast kin inside and outside the occupied area that it will remain the impregnable shield that will protect their security against the enemy's treachery and terrorism.

Lebanon: Hizballah Warns of Response to Israeli Attacks

NC3103165596 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1615 GMT 31 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Our correspondent in the south reports that the Israeli forces in al-Zaffatah and Qal'at al-Shaqif shelled Hima Arnun and Mazra'at al-Hamra' at 1700 today.

Hizballah Deputy Shaykh 'Ali Taha said this afternoon that Israeli warplanes this morning flew over northern al-Biqa' and staged mock raids over Wadi Fa'ra south east of al-Hirmil after releasing thermal balloons. He said the Israeli acts of aggression are not confined to specific areas. He warned that any attack will be met with the appropriate reaction, as happened yesterday when the Israeli settlements were shelled.

Lebanon: Hizballah's Qasim Views Katyusha Attack on Israel

NC3103200596 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1745 GMT 31 Mar 96

[Telephone interview with Hizballah Deputy Secretary General Shaykh Na'im Qasim by Jihad al-'Idan; place and date not given—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-'Idan] Your Eminence Shaykh Na'im Qasim, Hizballah's firing of Katyusha rockets at the Zionist settlements is considered by certain observers to be a new development in the strategy of revolutionary action. How do you view these operations and opinions?

[Qasim] In the name of God, the merciful and compassionate, the latest declaration by his eminence the Hizballah secretary general was a response to the Israeli bombardment of the village of Yatar, which killed two civilians and injured another. We considered that this act of aggression against civilians requires a special response, such as firing Katyusha rockets at northern Palestine. We have repeatedly declared as the resistance that the battle with the Israeli enemy is continuing and that when civilians are endangered, we must defend them by firing Katyusha rockets at northern Palestine—that is, at civilians there so that the Israelis stop their acts of aggression against civilians and defenseless villages. Therefore, we do not consider this to be a new development or measure, but a normal measure and an indivisible part of the resistance acts to protect the kinsfolk of the resistance.

[Al-'Idan] Does Hizballah's announcement on using martyrdom operations mean that this tactic is a new method to face the realities of the current stage?

[Qasim] It is well known that Hizballah was the first party to initiate martyrdom operations against the Israeli enemy. These operations occur every now and then. The fact that at times there is an increase of this type of action compared to other times is part of the battle. When we find that a fighter seeking martyrdom can inflict heavier losses on the Israeli enemy and when the field circumstances are favorable for such acts, we do not hesitate to use such operations. When we can inflict losses on the Israeli enemy without sending martyrdom fighters, we do that, because we do not send martyrdom fighters unless the battle requires it. Therefore, this is not an exceptional time for martyrdom fighters, because the history of the Islamic Resistance is full of various types of operations, including martyrdom operations. We want the Israeli enemy and all observers to know that we will use any method to harm the enemy that occupies our land to force them to withdraw from our land.

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[Al-'Idan] A number of Islamic ulema in Jordan issued a fatwa vindicating the martyrdom operations against Zionist civilians on the grounds that civilians are potential military personnel. How do you view this fatwa?

[Qasim] We consider this fatwa which supports the substance and principle of resistance and martyrdom operations to be good and inspiring for the general attitude, which is steadily growing in our region. Regarding the killing of civilians in the Israeli entity, Israel is primarily responsible for such killing. Israel's existence is due to its sheltering behind civilians and using them as shields to tighten their domination of the occupied land of Palestine. We do not consider that we are killing civilians; rather, Israel is killing them by its occupation of the land and its practices.

[Al-'Idan] How do you assess the Washington conference [on terrorism] and its repercussions on Lebanon?

[Qasim] It seems that the Washington conference was a failure. Washington wanted to focus world attention on supporting Israel under the banner of countering terrorism. However, problems emerged after the Sharm al-Shaykh summit because Israel sealed off the entire Palestinian people. This will make them great supporters of the Islamists. This situation, which may eventually bring down 'Arafat and all plans made for the region, must not be ignored. Differences over the agenda and proceedings and the failure to come out with any clear resolutions prove our contention that the Sharm al-Shaykh summit was aimed at supporting Shim'on Peres in the elections. Regarding the other goals, they seek them through bilateral relations and by exchanging information and supporting Israel. They can do no more.

[Al-'Idan] Certain sources say that your swift and violent response against the Zionist settlements created joy among the Lebanese and the population of the Palestinian camps in Lebanon and sowed panic in the Zionist entity. What about this?

[Qasim] This is not the first time that the Lebanese and Palestinians, and even all oppressed people, have been happy to see the Islamic Resistance score some victory and strike a blow to the Zionist enemy in defense of its people and kinsfolk. This is not the first time that the world has seen the Israeli cowardliness, frustration, and fear of the mujahidin, the owners of the land. We tell the whole world to return the land to its owners and not keep it in the hands of those who have occupied it by force, because the Israelis will never find safety in a usurped land. The owners of the land will remain strong and fear nothing. Those who lost everything will not be afraid. The mujahidin believe in God and know what they are promised for their jihad. This is something for the world to heed.

Lebanon: Israeli Planes Stage Mock Raids, Draw Ground Fire

NC0104113796 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1030 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israeli occupation forces positioned in Qal'at al-Shaqif shelled Mazra'at al-Hamra', Hima Arnun, and Kafr Tibnit this morning. An Israeli pilotless plane flew over Iqlim al-Tuffah at 1100 today. A tank belonging to the border militia [South Lebanese Army] positioned in 'Ayn Qinya, north of Hasbayya, fired three shells at the Mimas sector and the Zummarayya crossing. Israeli planes staged mock raids over the central sector, drawing ground fire from the Lebanese Army.

The day before yesterday, the Israeli occupation forces released the fishing boat Elham I, which was seized opposite the Tyre coast three weeks ago.

Lebanon: Bomb Detonated Under SLA Patrol; No Casualties

NC2903150996 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 1430 GMT 29 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Terrorists detonated an explosive device under a South Lebanese Army [SLA] patrol on the road between Sujud and al-Rayhan in the central sector of the border zone this afternoon. There were no casualties among the patrol members.

Lebanon: Group Claims Attack on Israeli Patrol in South

NC2903203396 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 2000 GMT 29 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Artillery belonging to the Israeli occupation forces in al-Zaffatah and al-'Ayshiyah bombarded the outskirts of al-Nabatiyah al-Fawqa, the deserted army barracks in al-Nabatiyah, and the peripheries of Kafr Tibnit, Habbush, al-Wadi al-Akhdar and the Nab' al-Tasah river basin this afternoon.

The Syrian Social Nationalist Front issued a statement this afternoon saying that one of its groups attacked an Israeli patrol on the road between al-Dabshah and 'Ali al-Tahir with rockets and machine-gun fire. A support fire unit belonging to the front shelled the 'Ali al-Tahir post with mortar fire, causing casualties among its the personnel manning it.

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Lebanon: Nasrallah—Party To Adopt Suicide Operations Strategy

NC2903204496 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 2015 GMT 29 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Hizballah Secretary General Hasan Nasrallah has affirmed that the party will adopt a strategy of suicide operations in south Lebanon, similar to the operation that was carried out by one of the party's suicide attackers against an Israeli convoy in the occupied area on 20 March.

Nasrallah said that the last operation marked a new phase in the resistance and field confrontation that aims to return the occupied strip to the homeland.

Nasrallah added that the resistance is an instrument of pressure Lebanon and Syria use as a bargaining chip to obtain their rights.

Lebanon: Israeli Attacks, Amal, 'Resistance' Reprisals Reported

NC3003085896 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Sharm al-Shaykh Summit's follow-up committee meeting, which discussed what it dubbed terrorism without referring to Israel's terrorism against Lebanon, ended today. This coincided with the escalation of Israel's nonstop attacks early today. These attacks are in progress while the resistance retaliated by carrying out several operations against the occupation posts.

This morning, the Amal Movement announced that its fighters carried out numerous attacks on the enemy positions, noting direct hits against enemy ranks. In a statement, it said that at 0520 today, one of its groups attacked the Bra'shit position while at the same time a second group attacked the Bayt Yahun position.

Shortly after the two attacks, the movement's guns pounded the two posts with mortar shells. It said about 45 shells landed in the posts and that the bombardment was concentrated on the town of Bra'shit where several homes suffered grave damage.

In the last 24 hours, the occupation forces concentrated their attacks on the western sector and Iqlim al-Tuffah while the enemy forces continued their siege of Bint Jubayl and Rabb al-Thalathin.

The Amal Movement and the Islamic resistance announced that their units have attacked enemy posts and patrols on the Sujud-al-Rayhan-Shama' Road and the al-Hardun post.

With regard to the [Israeli] naval blockade, Israeli gunboats are still cruising off the line between Ra's al-Bayyadah and Sarafand, frequently firing at the shore.

Security sources say Israeli occupation forces are still holding a number of citizens from the towns of Bint Jubayl, Hula, and Markaba, which is surrounded by Lahd's militia [South Lebanese Army].

Lebanon: Further on Israeli, 'Resistance' Attacks in South

NC3003101296 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] This morning, the Israeli enemy resumed the shelling of the liberated areas that were the target of artillery fire last night. Mujahidin groups retaliated with attacks targeting enemy posts and patrols. Samir 'Alamah has the details.

[Begin Samir 'Alamah recording] At 0530 today, the Zionist occupation forces stationed in Bayt Yahun, Bra'shit, and Muhaybib bombarded the outskirts of 'Ayta al-Jabal, Bra'shit, and Jabal al-Za'tar with 60-, 81-, and 155-mm rounds. The shelling coincided with heavy firing from all kinds of machine guns.

Shortly after midnight, movement by enemy vehicles in the al-Dabshah area was observed.

Yesterday, the occupation forces bombarded the outskirts of Qa'qa'iyat al-Jisr, Zawtar al-Sharqiyah, al-Nabatiyah al-Fawqa, Habbush, Kafr Rumman, and Kafr Tibnit, in addition to al-Litani River basin, the vicinity of the army's deserted barracks, Qasr Ghandur in al-Nabatiyah al-Fawqa, al-Wadi al-Akhdar, and Jabal Sujud in Iqlim al-Tuffah.

The Islamic resistance marked the anniversary of martyr 'Ali Ashmar when the Qamar al-Istishhadiyin unit detonated an explosive charge under a mechanized Lahdist [South Lebanese Army, SLA] patrol on the Sujud-al-Rayhan Road yesterday afternoon. A vehicle was destroyed, and its occupants were killed or wounded.

This morning, a resistance group waited for the Zionist enemy on the Shama' Road using machine guns and rockets. The fire support unit pounded the enemy post in al-Hardun, scoring direct hits.

The Syrian Social Nationalist Front announced that one of its groups attacked a patrol on al-Dabshah-'Ali al-Tahir Road yesterday afternoon. [end recording]

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Lebanon: Nasrallah, Shiites Cited on Operations, Bush's Visit

NC3003105096 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Hizballah Secretary General Hasan Nasrallah has emphasized that the mujahidin's qualitative operations in recent weeks in the occupied border strip, only a few meters from the border with occupied Palestine, have military and political significance. These operations, he noted, herald the start of a new phase of jihad by the Islamic resistance in Lebanon.

Nasrallah addressed a ceremony commemorating the hero of the al-'Udaysah-Rabb al-Thalathin martyrdom operation, the moon of martyrdom seekers 'Ali Munif Ashmar, organized by Hizballah in al-Barjawi Mosque, Bi'r Hasan, yesterday.

He said initiative in the occupied border strip was in the hands of the resistance as acknowledged by the enemy himself and by his senior officers, soldiers, and Prime Minister Rabin.

Commenting on the July [1993] understanding, his eminence said:

[Begin Nasralla recording]: [word indistinct] the July understanding or what is called July understanding. What is required in order for the Israeli [words indistinct] on him and on Lebanon? What is required is a halt in resistance operations. [words indistinct] negotiations.

For years, the Israelis have failed to amend this understanding, the understanding that only means the exclusion of civilians. It has nothing to do with [military] operations. These operations are not subject to negotiation. As long as there is occupation, there will be resistance. Even in the most hostile moment, the Americans and Israelis were unable to impose a conversion and halt the operations. [end recording]

Nasrallah noted that any attempt to block the way in the face of resistance will be futile. He disapproved the U.S. secretary of state's provocative analysis of what is happening to the Palestinians. He said Hamas' [Islamic Resistance Movement] operations are a result of Zionist terrorism.

He added that the operations carried out by the resistance in Lebanon and the jihad carried out by Hamas and Islamic Jihad in occupied Palestine are a resistance action that no one can halt no matter what measures he adopts.

Meanwhile, the leader's legal representative in al-Biqa' and the north, his eminence Shaykh Muhammad Yazbik, said the biggest devil's [the United States] hostility toward the state of God [Iran] stems from this country's explicit and courageous positions in support of the rightful people in Palestine. He emphasized that the Palestinian people are the claimants of right and we must back these people to enable them attain their rights.

Shaykh Yazbik added that global arrogant forces want the enemy to be teeming with all strategic weapons as the peace process continues. He said the enemy and those who collaborate with him want to confiscate our people's freedom and dignity and root out what is just. He stressed adherence to the leader's command and the option of resistance and jihad until we attain our rights and sanctities.

Commenting on George Bush's visit to Lebanon, Shaykh Yazbik asked: Why was there this extravagant reception for Bush? Was it because Bush was Saddam's main supporter in the first Gulf war and the one who launched the second [Gulf] war? Or was it because Bush caused all forms of destruction, oppression, and killing for Lebanon by supporting the usurping state?

He said Lebanon receives and bids farewell to people while numerous issues await solution and the south is ablaze. He added that government officials should have commemorated the martyrs instead of receiving someone who killed and slaughtered our people. [passage omitted]

Shaykh Subhi al-Tufayli, [former Hizballah secretary general], said the rulers in Lebanon celebrate the arrival of the Muslims' killer in Lebanon, Iraq, and Iran, George Bush, as their guest while workers are suffering from starvation and problems. These workers, he added, are not allowed to express their stands and views and the authorities claim they want to talk to the workers while they have offered them nothing.

Shaykh al-Tufayli said it was Bush who prompted Saddam Husayn to occupy Kuwait and that he was the one who provided support for the Zionists, and when he came to Lebanon, he was met with songs, dances, and joy.

He asked how the visit by a criminal to our country is celebrated even though he committed many acts of aggression against the country.

Lebanon: Hizballah Chief Threatens Retaliation for Civilian Deaths

NC3003200696 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1915 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A spokesman for the Israeli Prime Minister has announced that Shim'on Peres has asked the United States to intervene with Syria and Hizballah to maintain a calm situation in Lebanon. The

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spokesman added that an investigation into the Yatar incident has begun, and he noted that Israel has no wish to attack Lebanese civilians.

Hizballah Secretary General Hasan Nasrallah has threatened that Hizballah will shell northern Israel to avenge the killing of two Lebanese construction workers by an Israeli shell today.

Addressing the Israelis, Nasrallah said: Stay down in your bomb shelters today, tomorrow, and the day after that because the response to the aggression is coming. Only I do not know when it will come.

Nasrallah said he considers the bombardment of Yatar a violation of the agreement reached in July 1993. He asserted that Hizballah's commitment to the safety of Lebanese civilians makes it necessary for it to retaliate.

Lebanon: Commentary on 'Danger' of Israeli Nuclear Reactor

NC3003120796 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 30 Mar 96

[From the "Highlights on Events" program: "A Nuclear Terrorism"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Presidents and kings held lengthy meetings at Sharm al-Shaykh and spoke elaborately about terrorism by those who blow themselves up like bombs exploding in the face of occupiers.

When the time came to talk about Israel's nuclear terrorism against the entire region, everyone stood silent. They were satisfied by the Jewish cousins' media statements that there was no nuclear leakage from the Dimona reactor.

As for Washington, which is very busy talking about terrorism, it is not satisfied by just turning a blind eye to the existence of about 200 nuclear bombs in Israel. It wants to legitimize the presence of these bombs by pushing through a declaration at the meeting of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit's follow-up committee.

The declaration recognizes Israel's right to maintain a nuclear deterrent force to handle dangers to its survival. This is briefly the situation of the region caused by most Arab leaders' apathy and agentry toward the Zionist occupier without a tiny shred of nationalism behind which they could hide. [passage omitted]

Undoubtedly, a hotbed of terrorism beyond imagination now lies in the Negev. All words to describe the magnitude of this danger cannot reach the heart of the matter. Israel's very existence is a danger threatening the region and the enemy entity's possession of nuclear reactors greatly increases this danger. The more so when these reactors are of a very old type that has begun to rust, which makes them liable to destruction at any moment. [passage omitted]

In short, there is a horrible danger threatening the region in the presence of the Zionist nuclear reactor. Signs of this danger began to surface in a report carried by the enemy's television, and this represents the peak of Zionist terrorism against this region.

Finally, there is a question: Does an imminent danger like this not deserve a summit by Arab kings and presidents?

Lebanon: Workers Schedule 'Sit-In' for Chirac's Parliament Address

NC2903205196 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 2015 GMT 29 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The executive council of the General Workers Federation has decided to observe a "sit-in" in front of the Chamber of Deputies building on 4 April, at the time French President Jacques Chirac visits Lebanon and delivers a speech before the chamber.

The council appealed to all trade unions and citizens to take part in the sit-in and subsequent moves.

The council decided to hold an extraordinary meeting with the trade unions coordination committee on Wednesday evening to determine the dates of the strike and demonstrations in light of the cabinet decision.

In the first official reaction, Prime Minister's Adviser Muhammad Kishli said that the call is unacceptable. He added that certain measures will be taken as of tomorrow to enquire into the matter.

Lebanon: Officials Dissatisfied With Planned Workers Sit-In

NC0104055196 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0430 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The decision by the General Workers Federation [GWF] to stage a sit-in in front of the Chamber of Deputies on Thursday [4 April] is an escalation in the GWF's stances despite the positive atmosphere surrounding the ongoing dialogue between the government and the GWF.

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Government officials have expressed dissatisfaction with the GWF's decision, considering it out of place, because it comes when Lebanon is preoccupied with receiving the first French president since independence.

These officials believe the GWF's step is a media gimmick more than anything because the GWF fully realizes the security measures that will be taken and that will not allow anyone to approach the Chamber of Deputies.

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Syria: Press Views European Role in Middle East Peace Process

JN2903125196 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 29 Mar 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In a commentary today, the newspaper AL-BA'TH emphasizes the importance of Europe's role in the peace process and the need for that role to be vigorous. It also addresses the importance Europe attaches to Syria's crucial role, saying: The importance Europe attaches to the Syrian role in all regional and international issues is not new. This importance is the outcome of interaction between various interconnected factors that recognize the importance of Syria's role in terms of politics and economics. The premise that there can be no just and comprehensive peace without Syria has become an established fact to power circles in the international community, particularly in Europe. Likewise, economic cooperation between Syria and the EU and the efforts to reach a Syrian-EU partnership arrangement, which gained momentum after the Barcelona conference, are also important.

AL-BA'TH adds: The European role will remain particularly important due to the geographic proximity between the region and Europe as well as the common interests between the Europeans and Arabs. That is why His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad underlined the importance of the European role to the French envoy yesterday. This is to be added to similar previous pronouncements by al-Asad that could reinvigorate peace efforts to render them harmonious with the formula of the Madrid conference, whose resumption is required by Syria.

AL-BA'TH concludes by saying: Leader al-Asad's call for a vigorous European role reaffirms Syria's desire to achieve a just and comprehensive peace and give the Europeans a chance to put their weight behind the peace efforts, which is in the interests of both the Europeans and the Arabs.

In a commentary today, the newspaper AL-THAWRAH says: Since the peace process was launched in Madrid four-and-a-half years ago, Israeli leaders and politicians, from both the Likud and the Labor parties, have never been anxious to promote it. The Israeli rulers, who came under pressure from world public opinion, were forced to get involved in the Madrid process. But they fervently sought to contain this process, empty it of its contents, waste time, prolong the talks, and exercise blackmail. In the absence of firm international deterrence and despite the Arabs' commitment to peace as a strategic option, this policy managed to torpedo all peace opportunities, avert progress on the negotiating tracks, and neutralize international legitimacy and the relevant Security Council resolutions, which killed the opportunity for progress. This undermined the credibility of the United Nations and its institutions, dwarfed their role, and weakened their principles and charters, which deem occupation and the acquisition of others' territory by force in admissible and provide for Israeli withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 borders and the restoration of the Palestinian people's legitimate rights.

AL-THAWRAH concludes by saying: Despite the haughtiness and intransigence of Israel's policy and regardless of the powers that back it, Syria will not be intimidated. Moreover, Syria will not budge from its principled constants, which adhere to the full restoration of the territories and rights in the Golan and southern Lebanon as the basis for a just and comprehensive peace. This peace must be grounded in the principles of balance [al-tawazun], equitability [al-takafu'], and equality [al-musawah] in security arrangements. Syria will also reject anything that goes against the convictions of our people and nation or grants the aggressor any privileges or gains. Syria will accept nothing short of a peace arrangement that can ensure the security and dignity of everyone on the basis of the terms of reference agreed to at the Madrid conference.

In another commentary, the newspaper AL-THAWRAH says: Any viable and lasting peace arrangement must have bases, criteria, equations, and standards to ensure equality and evenness between the parties concerned. The peace arrangements concluded thus far in the Middle East are flawed, which works to Israel's advantage.

The paper adds: By according the fight against terrorism precedence over peace, the Sharm al-Shaykh conference placed the cart before the horse. It failed to address the root causes of violence and counterviolence. It failed to address the continued Israeli occupation and Israel's refusal to meet the requirements of peace, chief among which is complete withdrawal from the occupied territories. Only just and comprehensive peace can bring security and stability to all sides.

AL-THAWRAH concludes: The two cosponsors of the peace process still have the time to salvage the situation by extending invitations for the resumption of the Madrid peace conference and by making Israel comply with its terms of reference, which Syria demanded when the invitations to the Sharm al-Shaykh conference were extended.

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Syria: Al-Shar'—Peace Options 'Limited, Extremely Clear'

MM2903152196 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 29 Mar 96 pp 1, 4

[Report by Samir 'Atallah in Damascus: "Al-Shar' Tells AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT: Peace Options Are Limited but Extremely Clear"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] The interview with Minister al-Shar' was not a traditional interview as such, and one had to make guesses from the atmosphere and comments. I do not know how I can describe the atmosphere, but the weather in Damascus was bright and noticeably chilly. No doubt at all that the [peace] settlement is at a crossroads: No doubt that the developments of the last weeks have changed the bridges' pillars to ropes. True, there is no breakdown, but there is definitely some ice on the horizon.

Madrid is neither over nor closed, says Minister al-Shar', reminding the listener that when one of the cosponsors, the Russian foreign minister, announced the end of the Madrid conference, he — the Syrian delegation's head — rose to object and announced that Madrid was a track that should end only with a comprehensive peace. James Baker then intervened to comment on Minister al-Shar's proposal. Madrid has not closed the doors, even though some of its doors provided an early exit for some.

In Faruq al-Shar's world, one senses that the majority of Arab states and Arab people are undeniably for peace. However, one question remains: What peace? What peace with occupation? "Unless the occupation ends, violence and retaliation will not end." Israel wants security, but what security is possible with the occupation continuing?

Everything now seems to be on hold until the Israeli elections. The United States has pinned everything on Shim'on Peres' success or failure. Everything. That was the reason for Sharm al-Shaykh, on the premise that Peres is the man of peace in Israel. "Let us wait and see, then." Will this pessimism persist after Peres' victory? And what if Netanyahu wins? Will they tell the world that he is the enemy of peace as they say about others? Will the United States treat Israel in the same way?

Minister al-Shar' says: "The options are narrow and limited, but extremely clear." In his view, Sharm al-Shaykh is U.S. solidarity with Peres, and hence with Israel, when what is needed is U.S. solidarity with peace. Peace is indivisible. Everything is indivisible. "In a land which was not his, and in the heart of the al-Ibrahimi mosque, Baruch Goldstein committed massive slaughter, and yet we did not hear that they demolished his home. They gave him a grave in Hebron." Minister al-Shar' says that what is happening is a reaction by those who are fed up with the occupation. Subjugation begets self-sacrifice. Summits should first examine the roots of the problem, because the easiest way to fight terrorism is to eradicate its causes. This can be achieved by a just and comprehensive peace. A just and comprehensive peace requires complete withdrawal. It does not take experts and analysts to understand this!

In Damascus, there is still some dissatisfaction with the U.S. bias toward Israeli views, or at least toward Israeli policies. There is a feeling, or rather a view, in the Syrian capital that a large number, nay the majority of Americans, want and work to achieve a genuine peace in the Middle East, but the Administration itself is confused, a captive of the election elements which resurface every time, the same elements which ended the term of George Bush, the man who, two days ago, spent hours with President Hafiz al-Asad discussing mainly relations between the two countries and their impact on the whole region.

Wherever Syria looks, it sees an international extension to its geographical relations! There are three hills surrounding the Syrian capital behind which are three issues: The Palestinian issue! The Lebanese issue! and the Euphrates which rises in Turkey and flows into Iraq! Not to mention the regional implications behind those hills and along the rivers.

How does the region seem from Faruq al-Shar's office? The minister is smiling until this question is asked. His smile then becomes the Syrian diplomatic smile. After leaving his office and while strolling in Damascus's squares I suddenly reach the old railway station, where an antique carriage is on show.

It was stationary!

Syria: Radio Commends French Position on Peace Process

JN2903163596 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 29 Mar 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Over the past few days, President Hafiz al-Asad received former U.S. President George Bush, and a letter from French President Jacques Chirac, delivered by a special envoy. President Hafiz al-Asad affirmed to the former U.S. president and to the French president's envoy Syria's adherence to the peace process in accordance with the agreed principles which, at the time, led to the convocation of the Madrid conference. The president also explained that the foundering of the peace process can be attributed to the obstacles

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and impediments placed by Israel, which prevented any progress so far.

Former U.S. President George Bush and the French president's envoy voiced appreciation for Syria's positions and constructive contributions to the advancement of the peace process. This shows that the international community is convinced that Syria made large and positive efforts and even rescued the peace process many times from collapse. This also shows that there is a general conviction that Syria's participation is essential and that it is impossible for peace to prevail in the Middle East without Syria's effective participation.

Syria participated in the Washington and Maryland talks with sincerity and true faith in the need to realize peace. Although it reaped many disappointments in the past, Syria responded to every serious and sincere effort and never stopped urging the international community to shoulder its responsibilities and to dot the i's and cross the t's with respect to Israel's defiance of the international community's resolutions, principles, and charters.

On every occasion, Syria warned against being lured by Israeli proposals and double-standard policies. Thus, it called for condemning aggression regardless of its origin. Syria expected the international community to adopt balanced [mutawazinah] positions that help realize peace and not to avert its eyes from Israel's insistence on pursuing its defiance, maneuvering, intransigence, and evasion of the requirements of the peace process.

This situation led to the recent violent incidents Israel exploited to disavow the peace process and its requirements, to renew policies of collective terrorism and systematic suppression against the Palestinian people, to arrest thousands of them, and to subjugate the occupied lands to a tight siege which reached the point of starvation.

Amidst this international position, which is sympathetic with Israel, and which had a negative impact on the future of the peace process and increased the intransigence of Tel Aviv rulers, France voiced a position which is different from that of the European Union only a few days ago. It called for tackling the cause and not the effects of the crisis. We mention here that Syria officially sent letters to the two sponsors of the peace process asking them to resume the Madrid conference to discuss the reasons which prevented the implementation of agreed principles. While receiving President Chirac's envoy yesterday, President Hafiz al-Asad welcomed an effective French and European role and said Syria is fully ready to cooperate with such an endeavor to extricate the peace process from its predicament.

Those who sincerely seek to realize peace in the Middle East can see with their own eyes that Israel's policies and practices prevent any progress. Syria abided by just peace. Israel, however, did not abide by the withdrawal and obstructed the Maryland talks. It did not even honor the agreements it concluded with the self-rule authority, even though they harm Palestinian rights.

In light of these circumstances, the international community and its influential parties should assume special responsibilities to urge Israel to truly respond to the principles and requirements of peace, most prominent among which is full withdrawal. Peace in the Middle East has become an international need in addition to being a regional one.

Syria: Israel's Supporters Encourage 'Nuclear Terrorism' in Region

JN0104123096 Damascus SYRIA TIMES in English 1 Apr 96 p 5

[Editorial: "Israel's Nuclear Terrorism"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Israel's nuclear activity and possession of mass annihilation weapons, including nuclear bombs are certainly no more a secret, though Tel Aviv's policy of nuclear armament was already at full swing.

Nuclear cooperation consolidated between Israel and some of its backers has been acknowledged overtly and covertly. And hence, no one can ignore the grave danger emanating from Israel's nuclear policy at a time when the world is seeking to curb this threatening danger and to wipe it out once and for all.

Israel's supporters are thereby held responsible for aiding Tel Aviv in establishing nuclear research centres for military purposes and in allowing it to get necessary materials for nuclear war industry. Those supporters urged Israel directly or indirectly to practice nuclear terrorism in the region and to cling fast to arrogant intransigence and hegemony, while peoples are looking forward to seeing the region secure and stabilized.

Israel's policy of nuclear armament and its gross violation of international conventions on nuclear arms are actually a flagrant challenge to the world community and to all peace-loving peoples. Thus keeping silent about Israel's nuclear activity and its sinister policies deals a strong blow to peace, and may bring about evil consequences on the entire region and its people.

President Hafiz al-Asad last Wednesday [27 March] made a telephone call with President Husni Mubarak

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of Egypt on news reports confirming leakage from the Israeli "Dimona" nuclear reactor. The two leaders talked about this crucial matter and its catastrophic consequences. the leaders' deep concern which must be shared by world leaders was derivative from national and human necessities.

The United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency should immediately send specialist teams to investigate the deadly leakage and to inspect all Israeli nuclear installations. The Security Council must also take quick measures to avert a catastrophe whose consequences might be more evil and destructive than those of wars.

Since the world is driving for setting up a just and comprehensive Mideast peace, it is more useful and plausible to start serious and practical steps to bridle Israel's policy and to collectively work for making the ME [Middle East] and the whole Mediterranean basin nuclear-free Zones.

The pressing task is however represented by besieging any danger coming from and Israeli nuclear leakage. It is also very important to eliminate Israel's nuclear arsenal which constitutes a hot-bed of grave threat to peoples and to regional and world peace. Israel must be urged to stand to reason and to join the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty, and its sinister policies should be terminated before the whole region is put on the verge of total collapse.

Syria: Ba'th Official Urges U.S., Russia To 'Pressure' Israel

JN3003145696 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1215 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Under President Hafiz al-Asad's patronage, a ceremony was held at Tishrin University, Martyr Basil al-Asad's Auditorium, today on Syrian Arab Student Day. The ceremony was organized by the National Federation of Syria's Students. Comrade Dr. Sulayman Qaddah, assistant regional secretary of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, deputized for President al-Asad. [passage omitted]

Comrade Dr. Sulayman Qaddah, President Hafiz al-Asad's representative, delivered a speech at the ceremony. [passage omitted]

Comrade Qaddah spoke about the current situation in the Arab and international arenas. He said: We in al-Asad's Syria look forward to Arab unity, because it is our destiny and path toward victory and dignified life. We are doing everything we can to strengthen pan-Arab ties and activate Arab solidarity and joint action. This stems from our commitment to higher pan-Arab interests and to defending our nation's causes and historical rights and confronting all forms of cultural and political invasion and colonialist occupation.

Comrade Qaddah asserted that Syria, under President Hafiz al-Asad's leadership, is faithful to its principles and will not relinquish its territory and the nation's rights and interests. Syria believes in, and is committed to, the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace in the region. It is working honestly and seriously to achieve this noble objective. Syria expressed a clear and sincere position that calls for achieving a just and comprehensive peace on the basis of the resolutions of international legitimacy and the principle of land for true peace. This peace must provide rights, dignity, security, and stability for everybody and be acceptable to the people and defended by generations.

Comrade Qaddah said Israel's expansionist and aggressive ambitions are still commanding its policy and stands, which are characterized by arrogance, deceit, and hegemony. Israel is conducting campaigns of pressure and blackmail and placing obstacles in the way of the peace process. It seeks to create despair and thwart the peace process so it can maintain its occupation of Arab territory.

The assistant regional secretary of the Ba'th Party also spoke about the continued Israeli attacks on defenseless people in southern Lebanon and its insistence on maintaining its occupation of the Golan and the occupied Arab territories. He asserted that pursuing this aggressive policy will only lead to further acts of resistance and violence, which are escalating as occupation and injustice continue. This is because resistance is legitimate self-defense approved by all laws and norms.

Comrade Qaddah called on the international community and the two sponsors of the peace process to shoulder their responsibilities and pressure the Israeli occupation authorities into abandoning its unjust iron-fist policy and suppressive practices. They should also pressure Israel into reembracing the Madrid conference formula, foundations, and frame of reference. This formula is an appropriate, sound, and agreed-upon framework to save and revive the peace process, force Israel to comply with and implement international resolutions, withdraw its occupying forces from the Golan and southern Lebanon to the 4 June 1967 lines, and remove all manifestations of injustice, oppression, and hegemony. This is the only practical guarantee to provide rights, dignity, security, and stability for everybody.

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Syria: Papers Emphasize Need for Just, Comprehensive Peace

JN3103090296 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 31 Mar

[From the press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] TISHRIN stresses that it is impossible to arrive at a just solution to the regional crisis without a balanced and fair international position.

The paper says: Many people pinned great hopes on the U.S. initiative and on the United States' commitment to achieve a just and comprehensive peace on the basis of the UN Security Council resolutions and to play the role of a fair and impartial partner.

TISHRIN says: With Europe's absence from the peace talks and with Russia's preoccupation with its domestic problems, Israel, on the pretext of security, was able to evade, procrastinate, and place obstacles in front of the resolutions of international legitimacy. As a result, the Syrian and Lebanese tracks were frozen, and Israel was able to evade the substance of the international resolutions and the land-for-peace formula by signing agreements with the Palestinian party that did not guarantee the Palestinians' rights or achieve the desired peace.

TISHRIN adds: The international parties that are sponsoring the peace process did not take any action to adjust the course and underline the principles and constants of the Madrid Conference. Instead, they dealt with the new status quo as if peace had actually been achieved. Instead of concentrating efforts to address the root of the problem, the obstacles to peace, and Israel's responsibility for squandering the opportunities for peace, they adopted Israel's logic without trying to differentiate between terrorism and legitimate national resistance. Nor did they try to discuss the reasons for the recent bombings in Israel.

The paper notes that some EU member states tried to restore balance to the international policy and declared publicly that Syria has a basic role to play in the region and that it is removed from any charges.

TISHRIN concludes: Syria made significant contributions to help convene the Madrid Conference and to boost the peace process. Israel, meanwhile, obstructed progress. It is impossible to achieve peace in the region without a balanced, objective, and decisive international position that exerts pressure to implement the resolutions of international legitimacy.

AL-THAWRAH also discusses the peace process. It says: Israel, which is evading the requirements of peace, particularly complete withdrawal in accordance with the pertinent resolutions of international legitimacy that provided the foundations for the Madrid Conference, is trying to set its own concept of peace. This Israeli concept is based on aggressive considerations and its desire to keep either all or part of the occupied territories. Israel also seeks to impose the conditions of hegemony on the region through normalization, which circumvents the principles of peace, as well as the return of occupied Arab land and usurped Arab rights. Moreover, Israel seeks to establish diplomatic, economic, cultural, and even security relations, separate from the conditions of evenness [ta'adul], equitability [takafu'], and equality [tasawi] in peace commitments.

The paper stresses that the just and comprehensive peace is the only, real gateway to security and stability in the region. Peace cannot be established as long as the occupation and the distortion of ideas and evasion facts continue. If Israel is still interested in peace, then it is asked once again to abide by the principles of peace and its terms of reference. The peace process cosponsors must also abide by these principles. They are now asked, more than ever before, to reconsider the peace process, discuss the obstacles and difficulties, and define a mechanism for a driving force that is based on the spirit, texts, and mechanism of the Madrid conference in order to rescue the opportunity for peace and ensure the success of the efforts to achieve a just and comprehensive peace according to the standards of international legitimacy and the requirements of security and stability for all parties, and not according to the Israeli conditions, which are pushing peace to the edge of collapse.

Syria: Paper Questions Opening of 'Some Arab Doors' for Israel

JN0104112296 Damascus SANA in Arabic 0710 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Damascus, 1 Apr (SANA)—[passage omitted] TISHRIN, for its part, says that Israel refuses to abide by international legitimacy resolutions, clings to its occupation of the Golan and southern Lebanon, and denies the Arabs their rights to their land, life, and existence. Depite this, we hear official announcements that some Arab doors were opened for Israeli officials as some kind of Israeli penetration of the Arab arena in a bid to normalize relations between some Arab states and Israel.

The paper wonders: What lies behind this opening of doors? Why this insistence on rolling out the red carpet for Israeli officials on our Arab land before just and comprehensive peace is realized in the region?

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The paper warns against rewarding the Israelis while they still control our land, pursue a policy which denies us our rights, and seeks to control our resources and wealth in order to destroy our national will.

The paper points out that by penetrating the Arab arena, Israel wants to imply that its terrorism and aggression in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and southern Lebanon is some sort of self-defense, and it is therefore not responsible for the stumbling or suspension of the peace process.

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Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Delegation Meets U.S. Assistant Secretary of State

LD3003175896 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Esteemed Dr. 'Abdol Rahman, minister of civil aviation and tourism, who led a high-ranking delegation from Afghanistan on a working visit to Washington, recently met and spoke with Mrs. Robin Raphel, assistant secretary of state [for South Asian affairs]. Esteemed 'Abdol Rahim Ghafurzai, deputy minister of foreign affairs, was also present.

During the meeting, detailed talks were held on subjects of mutual interest and military/political developments in Afghanistan.

Both sides emphasized the solution of the Afghan question through talks and understanding, the ending of foreign intervention in Afghan internal affairs and, [word indistinct].

According to another report, the Afghan delegation also met Senator Brown. Both sides held talks on subjects of mutual interest.

Afghanistan: Foreign Minister Views Indian, Pakistani Ties

BK3103105096 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 31 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Afghan foreign minister says Kabul is against foreign intervention and involvement in other country's affairs. Talking to Indian newsmen in Kabul, Dr. Najibollah Lafra'i said the Rabbani government is not involved in sending mercenaries to Kashmir Valley for militant activities. On the Kashmir issue, he said Afghanistan is in favor of India and Pakistan resolving the issue mutually. Dr. Lafra'i said Kabul is eager to develop political and other relations with India. While appreciating India's humanitarian assistance in the crisis period, he said Kabul needs New Delhi's support for reconstruction and rehabilitation.

Reiterating the charge that Pakistan is actually supporting Taleban militias, he called for international pressure on Pakistan to end its support to Afghan factions. He criticized Islamabad for not seeking Kabul's permission before opening the highway from Quetta to Kandahar. The foreign minister said that President Rabbani is ready to transfer power to a broad-based government and is prepared for talks with Taleban to end the conflict.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh: Zia Asks President To Form 'Nonparty' Government

BK2903152596 Hong Kong AFP in English 1457 GMT 29 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DHAKA, March 29 (AFP) — In talks Friday, Bangladesh Prime Minister Khaleda Zia asked President Abdur Rahman Biswas to form a non-party government "within the quickest possible time," official sources said.

The sources, without giving immediate details, said the talks lasted for more than 40 minutes and that there might be more developments later Friday.

Zia, who has been at the centre of an increasingly violent opposition campaign, travelled under tight security, with police blocking roads and troops patrolling the streets around the Bangabhaban presidential palace, the sources said.

Her talks with Biswas came amid appeals from non-political groups including civil servants and business leaders that she step down to end the longstanding crisis.

The dissolution of parliament and Zia's resignation became inevitable after Biswas signed into law a landmark bill under which all future elections in Bangladesh would be organized by a neutral caretaker government.

Sources said former chief justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman was likely to be the chief of the 11-member caretaker government.

The temporary government meets one of the core demands of the opposition, which has also insisted that the crisis can only be solved once Zia resigned.

The opposition on Thursday resumed its nationwide "non-cooperation" campaign to push for Zia's resignation. There was a two-day break for celebrations to mark the country's 25th independence celebrations.

The campaign started March 9.

Bangladesh: Zia Supporters, Opposition Clash in Barisal

BK2903162896 Hong Kong AFP in English 1534 GMT 29 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DHAKA, March 29 (AFP) — At least one man was killed and 100 people injured on Friday in a southern Bangladesh district, as supporters of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia clashed with rivals, witnesses said.

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It was not immediately clear which party the dead man belonged to. Some 30 of the injured were hospitalised with bullet or bomb injuries, witnesses said.

The clashes in coastal Barisal district erupted after supporters of Sheikh Hasina Wajed's main opposition party, the Awami League, allegedly attacked the office of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

The violence then spread quickly.

BNP supporters retaliated, with both sides using guns and bombs, by ransacking offices of the Awami League and those of the opposition Jatiya Party.

The incidents came during the opposition's nationwide "non- cooperation campaign" to press for Zia's resignation and elections under a neutral caretaker government.

The dissolution of parliament and Zia's resignation became inevitable this week after the country's president signed into law a landmark bill under which all future elections in Bangladesh would be organized by a neutral caretaker government.

Still, in the absence of a declaration by Zia as to when she plans to step down, the general strike has continued.

Bangladesh: Zia Asks President To Dissolve Parliament

BK3003123896 Hong Kong AFP in English 1226 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Dhaka, March 30 (AFP) — Bangladesh Prime Minister Khaleda Zia said at a public rally Saturday that she has asked President Abdur Rahman Biswas to "hand over power to a non-party" government and dissolve parliament.

"Now we are on the streets with and with the people," she told supporters of her Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) in downtown Dhaka.

"We brought democracy and will continue to fight for democracy," Zia said.

Bangladesh: Parliament Dissolved; New Caretaker Government

BK3003165696 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 1600 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Abdur Rahman Biswas dissolved the sixth Parliament this afternoon. Earlier, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia requested the president to dissolve the Parliament.

Meanwhile, the president, in an interview with Radio Bangladesh at Bangabhavan [president house], has said he has designated the immediate past chief justice of Bangladesh, Mr. Justice Habibur Rahman, as the chief adviser of the proposed caretaker government. Justice Rahman accepted the offer and has already started working on the formation of the caretaker government, including selection of other advisers. He has already been provided with all necessary security. The president said all necessary arrangements have already been made to [words indistinct] to enable the caretaker government to take over as soon as Parliament is dissolved. He said he is fully aware of the urgency of the situation.

Our representative understands that the steps taken by the president will make it possible for the caretaker government to take over immediately, although 15 days times is provided in the Constitution 13th Amendment Bill. The president assented to the bill on Thursday. The president made a fervent appeal to all the parties to exercise restraint and refrain from their ongoing programs of noncooperation and abstention in the vital interest of the nation. He also sought the cooperation of all in the restoration of normalcy, peace, and order in the country. The president urged all relevant parties not to take law in their own hands.

The chiefs of three services called on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at her office this afternoon. Army Chief Lieutenant General Abu Saleh Mohammad Nasim, Navy Chief Rear Admiral Nurul Islam, and Air Chief Air Vice Marshal Jamaluddin Ahmed expressed their gratitude to the prime minister for her support for the development and welfare of the armed forces. Begum Zia thanked them and the members of the armed forces for performing their duties with sincerity, dedication, and the spirit of patriotism. The director general of BDR [Bangladesh Rifles], Major General Riaz Ahmed Chowdhury, and inspector general of police, A.S.M. Shahjahan, also called on the prime minister separately.

BNP [Bangladesh Nationalist Party] Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia addressed a rally in front of BNP central office at Mayapaltan this afternoon. She told the rally that she had come to power through people's verdict and is handing over the power in a constitutional way.

Meanwhile, the opposition parties continued their noncooperation movement by holding rallies from different manches [platforms] erected in various areas of the capital. Addressing the rally of the janata manch [people's forum], Mayor Mohammad Hanif said the demand for a caretaker government is not a demand of any particular party. He said they do not have anything to say if the people elect anybody of their choice as prime minister of the country. Mayor Hanif described janata manch as podium of peace. They do not hold any ('injustice') against anybody.

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Jamaat-i-Islami has called upon the people to remain alert so that the vested quarters could not foil the people's victory. Addressing a gathering at the (?ninth gate) of Baitul Mokarram mosque this afternoon, Jamaat Secretary General Matiur Rahman Nizami also called upon the political parties to perform their duties in a responsible way. He called upon the party workers to remain peaceful.

Workers Party Secretary General Rashid Khan Memon at a rally in Dhaka today said the movement for ensuring free and fair elections has to be continued even the demand for the caretaker government has been achieved.

A meeting of the central committee of Gono Forum was also held in Dhaka today. The meeting welcomed the president's initiative for formation of the caretaker government and called for maintaining law and order at any cost.

Jatiya Party brought out a procession in Lalbagh area in the city this afternoon. Some miscreants reportedly attacked the procession with bombs and gunfire, injuring Jatiya Party Secretary General Anwar Hussain Manju and presidium member Zafar Imam. In a statement, Jatiya Party acting chairman Mr. Anwar Rahman Chowdhury condemned the attack and demanded punishment of the miscreants.

Bangladesh: New 'Chief Adviser' Stresses Free, Fair Elections

BK3103081696 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 0200 GMT 31 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The newly appointed chief adviser, Justice Habibur Rahman, has expressed the hope that he will be able to accomplish the historic task of conducting free and fair elections. Talking to newsmen at Bangabhaban [president house] immediately after assumption as chief adviser, he said the task lay ahead is somewhat difficult but could be achieved with the cooperation of people and all parties. Justice Rahman said his immediate job is to maintain law and order in the country and establish an atmosphere conducive to free and fair elections.

Bangladesh: Military Service Chiefs Congratulate Chief Adviser

BK3103125296 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1200 GMT 31 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The chiefs of the three services today called on Mohammad Habibur Rahman, chief adviser of the caretaker government, at his office at the old Parliament building in Dhaka. Army chief Lieutenant General Abu Saleh Mohammad Nasim; Naval chief Rear Admiral Mohammad Nurul Islam; and Air Vice Marshal Jamaluddin Ahmed, the Air Force chief, congratulated Justice Habibur Rahman on taking over as chief adviser. They assured him of their total support and cooperation in performing his responsibility to uphold the Constitution, maintain law and order, and hold free and fair parliamentary elections.

Later, Major General Ejaz Ahmed Chowdhury, director general of Bangladesh Rifles, and Inspector General of Police A.S.M. Shahjahan called on the chief adviser separately. They pledged their full cooperation to the caretaker government.

Bangladesh: Caretaker Leader Pledges Free Elections

BK3103161496 Hong Kong AFP in English 1602 GMT 31 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Dhaka, March 31 (AFP) — The Chief Advisor of Bangladesh's new neutral caretaker government, justice Mohammad Habibur Rahman, made his first address to the nation Sunday, promising to hold free elections and ensure peace at any cost.

In a televised speech after taking over Saturday, he said: "Only free elections can repair disharmony in national life that is hampered because of political reasons.

"Peace and security is a prerequisite for holding free elections and we will not hesitate to take any stern step to ensure that."

He said the hated Special Powers Act of 1974, which allows detention without specific charges for 120 days, would not be used until it became a must and no one would be harassed.

"Despite some political unrest still prevailing in the country, we have nothing to worry about," Rahman said.

Former prime minister Khaleda Zia and her arch-rival Sheikh Hasina Wajed called for maintaining peace but attacked each other, with an eye [word indistinct] fresh general elections which are likely to be held in May.

Zia demanded at a large rally Sunday of her Bangladesh Nationalist Party that civil servants who took part in a national strike be fired.

"I demand the non-party caretaker government take stern measures against the officials for the sake of neutrality of the administration during the elections," she said, warning that she would otherwise launch a "strong campaign."

Meanwhile, two civil servants were fired at by unidentified men Sunday, but were unhurt, witnesses said. Police said an investigation was under way.

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Official sources said the civil servants later expressed concern about the incident and decided to take steps to restore normality in the administration quickly.

Wajed on Sunday accused Zia of corruption and causing deaths during the two-year opposition campaign and said the former premier should be punished.

"There have been at least 120 deaths of campaigners for a neutral caretaker government and I accuse Khaleda Zia for the deaths," Wajed said at a large party rally in front of the downtown Press Club.

She added: "I demand her punishment for the killings."

"Those responsible for corruption in her family and party must be arrested and put on trial," she demanded.

Traffic jams choked the streets of Dhaka again Sunday as relieved Bangladeshis attempted to put two years of political strife behind them.

A record three-week-long general strike called by the opposition was ended but rivalry between Zia and Wajed was expected to rage on.

Though businesses reopened after Rahman took over, police remained on alert because of fears of clashes between supporters of the two leaders.

After two years of opposition campaigns that have left the economy in tatters, the turning point came Saturday night when Zia asked President Abdur Rahman Biswas to dissolve the parliament.

Bangladeshi businessmen and economists said now that the political crisis may be on way to resolution, the ravaged economy of one of the world's poorest countries is in desperate need of a "confidence-building drive."

In a country with a per capita income of only 220 dollars a year, a single day of nationwide general strike cost 25 million dollars. The 100 days of stoppages since March 1994 cost Bangladesh 2.5 billion dollars, over one-tenth of the country's entire gross domestic product, according to official estimates.

Rahman Sunday said his caretaker administration would pursue "friendship to all and malice to none" and strengthen ties with Islamic countries as well as world bodies such as the United Nations.

He urged political activists to pay heed to calls for restraint by their leaders and said "discipline does not only bring good to their respective parties, but also to the country."

Analysts warned the election campaign could turn nasty if the mudslinging continued, despite united appeals for calm by newspapers.

"No more vengeance, no more chaos and no more bloodshed," said the Bhorer Kagoj newspaper.

India

India: 'At Least' 20 Killed in Fighting Near Hazratbal Shrine

BK3003081496 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0730 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Jammu and Kashmir [J and K], at least 20 militants belonging to the JKLF [Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front]-Siddiqui Group were killed in a fierce encounter with the state police in Srinagar this morning. The killed included the chief of the outfit, Shabbir Siddiqui. They were hiding in a house near the Hazratbal Shrine. All the 20 bodies have been recovered.

Earlier, three militants have surrendered to the police when they were asked to come out of the house. Three women and two children also came out. Eight AK rifles have been recovered from the place.

Today's incident took place three days after the expiry of the governor's ultimatum to the militants in the state to surrender. The operation was continuing when reports last came in.

It may be recalled that eight militants of the outfit, including the self-styled commander in chief, Basharat Raza, and three so- called district commanders were killed in an encounter with the J and K police on Sunday last.

[Hong Kong AFP in English at 0635 GMT on 30 March adds: "At least 21 Muslim militants including the head of a faction of the outlawed Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) were killed in a gunbattle with Indian troops here Saturday, police said. Shabbir Siddiqui, president of a faction of the pro-independence JKLF, died along with 20 militants during heavy fighting near the holiest mosque in this Kashmir summer capital, additional director general of police Ashok Suri said.

["A JKLF commander confirmed that Siddiqui had been killed when Indian troops attacked the organization's headquarters near Srinagar's Hazratbal mosque, the most sacred Islamic shrine in the strife-torn Kashmir Valley. Masood Alam said that 17 JKLF militants, four children and three women were killed in addition to JKLF president Siddiqui, whose faction of the divided group was headed by the Pakistan-based JKLF chairman Amanullah Khan. He accused the paramilitary Border Security Force (BSF) of using mortars against the JKLF offices in an unprovoked attack which began around

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6:30 a.m. (0100 GMT) and left several houses gutted by fire. Alam denied police claims that the JKLF militants had returned the fire of the security forces and declared four days of mourning for the slain militants.

["Indian troops sealed off the area around Hazratbal following the clash and did not allow reporters to approach the scene. There were no immediate reports of casualties among security forces. Police sources said BSF troops exchanged automatic weapons fire with the JKLF guerrillas holed up in two houses after they rejected repeated calls to surrender."]

India: Further on Clash Near Kashmir Shrine; 6 Policemen Injured

BK3003090596 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Srinagar, 20 militants were killed in an encounter with Jammu and Kashmir [J and K] police early this morning. They include President of the JKLF [Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front] Shabbir Siddiqui.

The militants had taken shelter in the nearby house after vacating the Hazratbal shrine on Tuesday last [26 March]. Three militants surrendered to the police and three women and two children also came out of the house on being asked to vacate it. Sophisticated arms and ammunition have been recovered. Six jawans [noncommissioned officers] of the J and K police have been injured in the incident.

Today's operation comes three days after the expiry of the ultimatum by the governor to the militants in the state to surrender.

An official spokesman said in Srinagar today that the militants hiding in the house had threatened some senior citizens and members of the Muslim Aukaf Trust who had mediated in a recent incident at the shrine. The spokesman said that the militants had also tried to prevent people from offering prayers at the shrine yesterday.

India: Bangladesh National Among 'Militants' Killed Near Shrine

BK3003160696 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Twenty militants were killed in an encounter with the Jammu and Kashmir police in Srinagar this morning. The killed include the president of the JKLF [Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front], Shabbir Siddiqui. The militants had taken shelter in a nearby house after vacating the Hazratbal shrine on Tuesday. An official spokesman said in Srinagar today that the militants were killed when the building in which they were staying caught fire in the exchange of firing between the militants and the police. Three women and two children were allowed to come out of the building before the firing started. Six policemen were injured in the incident. Eight AK rifles and one pistol have been recovered so far.

Meanwhile, 17 of the 20 bodies of the militants killed have been identified. Two bodies are said to be charred beyond recognition. One of the killed militants is stated to be a Bangladeshi national.

India: Police Deployed in Srinagar To Prevent Protests

BK3103083996 Hong Kong AFP in English 0632 GMT 31 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Srinagar, India, March 31 (AFP) — Police guards were posted outside mosques in the Kashmir summer capital on Sunday as a strike called to protest the deaths of 21 Muslim militants crippled the northern Indian state, police said.

Police took up positions outside hundreds of Islamic shrines in the Kashmir Valley following Saturday's gunbattle near Srinagar's Hazratbal mosque in which Indian troops gunned down 21 Muslim guerrillas.

"Kashmiri militants, at the behest of Pakistani intelligence agencies, may try to capture some of the shrines to disrupt the election process in Kashmir," additional director of police Ashok Suri said.

"As a precautionary measure we have deployed armed policemen around all shrines in Kashmir to foil the designs of these anti- national elements," he said.

Kashmir is to hold its first parliamentary elections since 1989 in May and the Indian authorities are expecting an upsurge in violence by Muslim separatist groups which have vowed to sabotage the vote.

This lakeside city of 800,000 people was tense following the deaths of 21 members of a faction of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), including the pro-independence group's president Shabbir Siddiqui.

The Indian authorities claimed the JKLF militants died in a gunbattle after refusing to surrender and attempting to seize control of the Hazratbal mosque, the holiest Islamic shrine in Kashmir, for the second time in a week.

A spokesman for the decimated group alleged that Indian troops used mortars to set ablaze a house where the unarmed guerrillas were holed up and shot them dead as they tried to flee.

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Club-wielding riot police and paramilitary troopers were deployed in strength around Srinagar on Sunday to prevent street protests against the deaths of the 21 JKLF guerrillas.

Border Security Force (BSF) troopers in battle fatigues fanned out across the city as a protest strike paralysed life here and in other towns in the Muslim-majority Kashmir Valley, witnesses said.

The JKLF has called a four-day protest strike to mourn the deaths of Siddiqui and the other slain militants, who were quietly buried in one of Srinagar's "martyr's graveyards" late Saturday.

Saturday's gunbattle came six days after the JKLF rebels seized the Hazratbal mosque in a shootout with police which left nine militants and two policemen dead.

Some 2,000 policemen and troops laid siege to the mosque, which houses a hair which Kashmiri Muslims believe comes from the beard of the Prophet Mohammed, but allowed the rebels to leave the shrine Tuesday and return to their nearby offices.

The two buildings housing the JKLF offices near the shrine were completely gutted by fire during Saturday's gunbattle. [passage omitted]

India: Islamabad TV Reports Protest Strike, Violence in Kashmir

BK3103140896 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 31 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Life came to a standstill in occupied Kashmir as four-day protest strike began to protest against the killings of about two dozen JKLF [Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front] activists in Srinagar. Bazaars and business centers, government and private offices, educational institutions, banks, and courts remained closed and traffic was off the road. The deserted roads and streets in Srinagar presented an eerie sight. Unannounced curfew is in force in parts of the city. Even so, anti-India demonstrations continued at various places and troops resorted to brute force to disperse the protesters. Dozens of people are reported injured.

The All Parties Hurriyat Conference has described the blood- drenched dargah [Hazratbal shrine] episode as part of a sinister Indian plan of genocide of Kashmiri Muslims. It said the unarmed activists of the liberation movement were massacred under a conspiracy and in violation of the agreements with them.

Meanwhile, in fresh acts of violence, Indian troops killed one person in Badgam area and two in Tral. Maulvi Mohammad Shafi, son of Jamaat-i-Islami leader Maulana Israr, was abducted by Indian agents in Shupiyan. Six young men were killed in Indian military operations — two in Pulwama, three in Athmoqam, and one in Kupwara. A number of soldiers were killed and injured in encounters with mujahideen at these places. In retaliation, mujahideen attacked with hand grenades military vehicles in Hindwara area, destroying eight of them. Several soldiers were reported killed and injured. This was described as one of the biggest mujahideen operations in Kupwara District. A mujahid, Mohammad Yusuf, was martyred in a shoot-out with troops in Naugam area after killing and injuring a number of troops. Another report says four soldiers were killed in a clash with mujahideen in Kokarnag area.

PTV special correspondent Ghulam Nabi Khayal reports on the aftermath of Hazratbal killing:

[Begin recording] The entire state of Jammu and Kashmir, including Azad Kashmir, observed a total shutdown today against killing of 22 Liberation Front fighters in Srinagar Saturday morning. The front fighters, including the outfit chief, Shabbir Siddiqui, were gunned down by the forces when they were holed up in a residential house near Hazratbal shrine in north Srinagar. All Parties Hurriyat Conference, the fighters organizations, and even the pro-India National Conference have condemned the gruesome killing. A Conference functionary, Professor Saifuddin Soze, has called upon the Indian Human Rights Commission to conduct an inquiry into the incident. The prime minister of Azad Kashmir, Sardar Mohammad Abdul Qayyum Khan, while commenting on these killings told this correspondent on phone from Muzaffarabad that such acts are an act of desperation on the part of the Indian authorities, which may be fraught with dangerous consequences. [end recording]

India: 4 More Bodies Recovered From Site of Kashmir Clash

BK3103153096 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1430 GMT 31 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Jammu and Kashmir, four more bodies have been recovered from the debris at Hazratbal. The total number of dead has risen to 24 in yesterday's encounter between the militants and the Jammu and Kashmir police. The bodies, said to be of male adults, are charred beyond recognition.

As already reported, 20 militants were killed in the encounter yesterday. The militants were hiding in a house after vacating the shrine on Tuesday last.

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Iran

Iran: Commentary on Joint U.S.-UAE Military Exercises

LD3103133196 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 31 Mar 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] The United Arab Emirates [UAE] and the United States have started a series of joint military exercises on the coast of the emirates since 30 March. In the maneuvers dubbed the Iron Falcon operation, some 1,200 U.S. forces are taking part. According to the chief of staff of the UAE Army, Shaykh Muhammad Bin-Zayid Al Nuhayyan, the aim of the joint military exercises is preserving the territorial integrity and enforcing defense power of the emirates. [passage omitted]

According to political analysts, the aim of the United States in taking part in such exercises is to smooth the ground for continuing its military presence in the Persian Gulf. Every year the United States holds a series of joint military exercises in the littoral states of the Persian Gulf. Presently there are tens of U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea. Meanwhile, the U.S. Administration resorts to every possible means to enforce its military presence in the Persian Gulf. Arms sales, observing the waterway of the Persian Gulf, and controlling the oil production and sales of the region are the main objectives of America, inciting the countries of the region and fanning political and military differences between them, or make the oil-rich shaykhdoms purchase advanced military hardware from the United States. These arms are suitable just for packing and expanding U.S. arsenals in the region and serve no role in creating security in the area and the oil-rich Arab countries.

According to most political analysts the main instigator of instability in the region is the United States which, by its incitings, further fans differences among the countries of the area. The territorial integrity and internal stability of regional countries is guaranteed when these countries can establish cordial ties among themselves, through respecting their bilateral rights.

So the question is: What is the U.S. Administration thinking of hundreds of kilometers far from its territory, except for its economic and political interests?

Iran: Commentary Criticizes Remarks on Iran's Nuclear Ambitions

LD2903151296 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 29 Mar 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] According to an Associated Press report, monitored on Thursday 20 March, the Zionist prime minister, Shim'on Peres, in an interview with the CNN has accused Iran of trying to acquire nuclear weapons.

In an attempt to draw a connecting line between the security of Europe and America with that of Israel, Peres called Iran a common danger to the economy of Europe and the U.S. and a threat to their very regimes.

According to political analysts, the coincidence of the repeated claims of Peres with the news of leakage of radioactive waste from the Zionist atomic base in Negev desert well shows the [?high] mood of Peres in his attempt to deviate the world public opinion from a danger which is threatening the security and health of the region and the world.

Owning over 200 nuclear warheads and shunning to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Zionist regime is the only Middle East country which is armed with nuclear weapons. Meanwhile, the U.S. foreign and defense secretaries, in line with Peres, have accused the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq and Libya of amassing huge amounts of chemical weapons.

According to political analysts, the fresh wave of claims of the U.S. and Zionist statesmen indicates their joint propaganda plot against the three countries so that they can prepare the world public opinion to make more interventions in the domestic affairs of the mentioned countries.

All international energy agencies approve of the peaceful end of the nuclear reactors which are underway in Iran. The nuclear facilities of the Islamic Republic of Iran are supervised by the experts of these agencies. These experts have freely visited the industrial and chemical facilities of Iran in their regular inspections.

However, in view of the fact that the oil resources are limited and given the economical aspect of the use of nuclear energy, now days most world countries utilize the nuclear power to provide the necessary power for their industrial and economic units.

In view of political analysts, as the illegal and domineering goals of the Zionist regime and the U.S. are in great contradiction with the interests of regional countries, they resort to making such baseless sayings so to create some critical points and make use of them.

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The recent claims of the Zionist regime and the U.S. are however justifiable in this regard. [sentence as heard]

Iran: Official—UN Human Rights Report 'More Balanced'

LD3103115296 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 31 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Islamic Republic of Iran has always supported human rights and made efforts toward the improvement of human rights in the international community.

Mohammad Javad Zarif, deputy foreign minister for international affairs, in an interview with a Central News Unit correspondent today, referred to a recent report by the special representative of the UN Human Rights Commission on Iran. He said: The assessment by international forums of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran has always been affected by political considerations and influenced by big world powers, particularly America and Zionism. The Zionist regime has itself been the main violator of human rights during the past few decades; so much so that the United Nations has had to form a number of committees for the sole purpose of monitoring Israel's anti-human activities.

Mr. Zarif stressed that Iran invited and cooperated with Maurice Copithorne, the representative of the UN Human Rights Commission, because Iran wanted to express its readiness and support for the reporting of realities in the Islamic society of Iran to the world. He said: Such representatives are of course influenced by the politically motivated negative propaganda disseminated against the world of Islam and the Islamic Republic of Iran. He added: The effects of such pressures have been particularly evident in the reports of the representative of the UN Human Rights Commission, particularly in his overcautious approach in reporting the positive cases.

Mr. Zarif went on to say: Of course in some cases we have differences of view — because of our ideology and system which are based on Islamic values — on humanity and ways of safeguarding the supreme values of human rights.

The deputy foreign minister for international affairs described the recent UN Human Rights Commission's reports as more balanced, and added: Having said that, it is necessary for Mr. Copithorne and two other representatives of the UN Human Rights Commission to pay even more attention in future in order to avoid being influenced, to be able to reflect the realities precisely, and to report the information they receive in an unbiased manner.

Iran: Intelligence Minister—89 'Spies' Arrested Last Year

LD3103174096 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 31 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The intelligence minister ['Ali Fallahian] announced in Ahvaz that in the past [Iranian] year [ended on 19 March] 89 spies who had been generally taking part in collecting information and collaborating with Iraq's intelligence service and bomb-planting operations, were arrested in Khuzestan province.

Fallahian referred to the killing of a number of foreign elements who had a lot of experience in carrying out counterrevolutionary projects in Khuzestan province and some other regions in the country, saying: Another one of Iraq's spies who was highly involved in the explosions in Ahvaz, was killed in a clash with the country's security forces.

The intelligence minister stressed: The unknown soldiers of the Imam of the Age — may God hasten his advent — are carrying out their duties with full strength.

The intelligence minister, in reply to our correspondent's question concerning the warrant issued by Berlin's prosecutor, said that this warrant was illogical, illegal, pointless, and issued under the specific influence of Zionism and America. Fallahian said: Just as we have repeatedly announced, we would like the Berlin court issue to be followed up without the insinuations of the Zionists and counterrevolutionaries and without the propaganda hue- and-cry, so that the facts could be clarified for the public and for world opinion.

The intelligence minister pointed to the immense efforts made by Tel Aviv and Washington to insinuate that Iran supports terrorism and to link every such incident to Iran, saying: Just as many Western forums and officials have also admitted, these claims are not based on any evidence and just as it became quite clear in the case of the explosion incidents in Argentina and Oklahoma, these accusations are useless attempts which are rooted in the hostility of the Zionists against Islam and the Islamic revolution.

Fallahian added: What lies behind the scene of the Berlin court is that the Zionist regime is seeking to exploit this court on account of the warrant which it recently issued, as a lever to bring pressure to bear against the Islamic Republic of Iran to pursue the issue of the release of that regime's missing pilot. Whereas we have repeatedly stressed and explained that this issue has, essentially, nothing to do with us and that we really do not know anything about these individuals.

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Iran: Organizations Greet Khamene'i on Republic Day

NC3003085396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0230 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] On the eve of 1 April [anniversary], various organizations, individuals, institutions, and departments issued separate statements on the upcoming Islamic Republic Day conveying greetings to His Holiness, the Lord of the Ages, [the occult imam] may God expedite his noble advent, greeting the great leader His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i, the esteemed martyrs' families, and the honorable Iranian nation.

Part of the statement issued by the Islamic Propagation Organization [IPO] said that the victory of the magnificent Islamic Revolution of Iran in the referendum of 12 Farvardin [1 April] in 1358 [year beginning 21 March 1979] defeated the plots of the East and the West.

In this statement, the IPO called on the various sections of the ever-present-on-the-scene people to display their firm determination in safeguarding the hallowed gains of the Islamic system with their obedience to the exhortations of the Vali-ye Amr-e Muslimin-e Jahan [guardian of the cause of the world Muslims], by combating the venomous propaganda of the Western mass media, and by their unified and forceful presence in all the areas and the sensitive junctures of the Revolution.

In the Information Ministry's statement, while honoring to the Day of God [Yowm Allah] of 1 April, it has been said: The sworn enemies of the Islamic Revolution spearheaded by the United States and Israel should know, despite their diabolical plots and ploys, the Islamic Republic of Iran will continue to strongly forge ahead with its reliance on God Almighty and the fortitude of the people.

Another part of the statement said: The Islamic Republic of Iran's hallowed system is a valuable and precious legacy of the late imam — may his soul be sanctified — and the dear martyrs of this land. The safeguarding of its gains under the sagacious guidance of the great leader — may his shadow continue — is a shari'i [according to the shari'ah — Islamic law] obligation for the fruition of the grand aspirations of his eminence Imam Khomeyni — may God be pleased with him.

The Interior Ministry, the Defense and Armed Forces Logistics ministry, the Joint Staff of the Armed Forces, the President's Bureau for Women's Affairs, the Islamic Revolution Martyrs' Foundation, the Imam Khomeyni Relief Committee, the Endowments and Charitable Affairs Organization, the Islamic Foundation of the Oppressed and the War Disabled, and other organizations and institutions have also issued separate statements congratulating the heroic Iranian nation on this great day.

Iran: Candidates' Coalition for 2d Elections Round Urged

NC0104131196 Mashhad EQTESAD-E KHORASAN ECONOMIC WEEKLY in Persian 16 Mar 96 pp 1, 6

[Editorial: "A Coalition is Necessary"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The first round of elections for the fifth term of the Majles ended in Mashhad, and one deputy from among the candidates won a seat. Competition for four of the remaining seats is to begin soon among eight of the candidates who will run in the second round.

What can be said to sum up the first round of elections is that there was a large number of candidates and views and, as a result, scattered votes. This was not so during the past term elections, when the first candidate was elected with a considerable majority of votes. Of course this dispersion of votes is, in itself, noteworthy and respected because it shows the freedom of the elections and offers proof that the various strata of society participated in the elections. The participation of various vocational groups, supporting their own candidates, shows that various strata of society regard their destiny with greater sensitivity and, by striving to support their own candidates, are trying to send those people to the Majles who will defend their vocational and social views and outlooks. This interest by various strata in the elections can be in the form of the interests of doctors, guilds, merchants, and cultural and sports circles, or of women in sending women deputies to the Majles to defend women's rights and positions.

Now that eight candidates remain, the campaign has adopted a more limited nature. The candidates who were unable to win in the first round, for any reason, should not show disinterest in participating in the second round. On the contrary, they should try to achieve conformity and coordination amongst themselves.

Since it is impossible for all the people to get to know all the candidates, the creation of an alliance or coalition among the candidates who have closer outlooks with one another can help the people choose the right person.

Thus, the wrong assumption that candidates working individually are more successful should be replaced with the view that a coalition of candidates, based on platforms and basic outlooks and not on political interests and comprising people who have experience in

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executive and scientific issues and are acquainted with the Majles, is valuable.

In this regard, the declaration of a general policy in the form of collective views, as was done in greater Tehran, is a good pattern which will help to encourage the people to vote for ideas, without resorting to slogans that are sometimes similar to cheers heard at sporting events.

The small number of candidates who remain pave the way for the people to be able to take advantage of the one month that we have left until the second round to study the situation more carefully and then vote.

Iran: Election Supervisor Replies to Rejected Candidate's Query

LD3003161696 Tehran BAHMAN in Persian 16 Mar 96 p 2

[Unattributed article: "Tehran Province Supervisory Committee's reply to a query raised by the editor-in-chief of the weekly 'ASR-E MA"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In reply to a query written by the editor- in-chief of the weekly ASR-E MA in the 16 Esfand [6 March] edition of our periodical BAHMAN, Hojjat ol-Eslam va!-Moslemin Kazem Seddiqi, head of Tehran Province's [Majles elections] Supervisory Committee, sent us the following letter:

To the honorable editor-in-chief of the weekly BAHMAN: In reply to a query published on page two of your 16 Esfand edition about the Supervisory Committee's rejection of the weekly ASR-E MA editor-in- chief [as a candidate to compete in the Majles elections], I deem it necessary to explain the facts behind the rejection process. Would you please publish my reply on page two of your coming edition, in accordance with the press law, so as to clarify the situation to your readers.

Your Excellency Mr. [Mohsen] Armin [chief editor of ASR-E MA]:

1. We expected you to be aware of God's strict instructions in the noble Koran, which warns: "Do not make a judgment on issues you are not fully familiar with." You, as a journalist and a writer, should have gathered all the facts before misleading your readers by publishing articles based on guess work and your own personal interpretation. Had you done so before picking up your pen to write, you would have not troubled yourself and would have not wasted the Supervisory Committee's precious time.

2. You should realize that the remarks made by the head of Tehran Province's [elections] Supervisory Committee were in general terms and he mentioned no names. We can say for certain that you were not the only member of the press or a political organization whose eligibility was not endorsed. We are not legally permitted to publish names of the rejected candidates. We would have done so if we were allowed to by the Shari'a [Islamic law].

3. We would like to point out that a letter written by the rejected candidate complaining about the screening process was investigated by the Province's Supervisory Committee. The committee found out that the said candidate's name was, in fact, not on its list of rejected applicants. That is, he was endorsed by the committee, but rejected at a later screening stage by the higher authorities.

4. It is quite surprising that this dear gentleman has threatened to sue us. A person like him, who is endowed with printing and publicity resources, should be thankful; and instead of complaining or — God forbid — resorting to threats, he should direct these resources to promote spirituality and piety in society. The former would raise vague questions, whereas the latter would remove anxieties and would satisfy the saints and believers.

5. It would have been more appropriate for a Muslim writer to remain calm after being rejected. He announced readiness to serve [as a Majles deputy], but was found unqualified in the screening process. There were other dear ones in the same situation but they did not become anxious or resentful after rejection. Rather, they demonstrated self-control and courteously continued serving in whatever position they held before the election process. They trust the legislative authorities and submit to the will of God and the Islamic system.

6. We hope our reply is not interpreted as some sort of confrontation against criticism. Thanks to divine help, we are performing our religious duty of supervising the elections process. In return we expect that you dear ones will be kind and will pray for us. We are striving to serve you and we wish success and prosperity for you all.

[Signed] Kazem Seddiqi, head of Tehran Province's Majles elections Supervisory Committee.

Pakistan

Pakistan: Situation in Kashmir After Activist's Killing Detailed

BK2903151496 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 29 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The situation in occupied Kashmir remained tense, and the people expressed their

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rage and anger at the sad demise of human rights activist Jalil Andrabi, who raised his voice against the Indian barbarities in held valley. The international human rights organization, Amnesty International, condemned the killing of Mr. Jalil Andrabi and held the Indian Government responsible for his killing. Amnesty International demanded that independent investigation should be made to lay bare the role of the Indian troops, which were involved in attacks on human rights activists, journalists, and prominent citizens. Such an investigation should also determine the fact that Mr. Andrabi was arrested by the Indian forces.

Meanwhile, Indian troops continue their repressive operations against the innocent Kashmiris. Five more people are reported killed by the troops in Srinagar, Hindwara, and Doda. Reports of clashes between the mujahideen and the Indian forces were received from many areas of occupied Kashmir. The mujahideen attacked a military convoy which was heading for siege of the area. A number of soldiers, including a deputy commander and an inspector, were killed on the spot, and many more were injured. After suffering heavy casualty, troops killed two innocent citizens, including a school teacher.

And now a report from our special correspondent in New Delhi, Ghulam Nabi Khayal:

[Begin Ghulam Nabi Khayal recording] In a fierce gun battle between one Kashmiri fighter and dozens of Indian soldiers, at least six Border Security Force, or BSF, personnel were killed in Kashmir yesterday. According to reports, the BSF soldiers laid a siege of Onto Hamam locality in Sopor, 50 km north of Srinagar, asking one fighter Bilal to surrender. Instead, Bilal opened fire at the forces, killing six of them on spot. The deceased also included one deputy commandant of the BSF. The forces then resorted to torching of six residential houses in the locality in which Bilal was also burned alive. Search operations were on till reports last came in.

Elsewhere in Kashmir, 14 people were killed in militancy-related incidents during last 24 hours. Meanwhile, normal life in Kashmir valley remained paralyzed for the third day today due to a four-day strike being observed in connection with the murder of Jalil Andrabi, a promising lawyer and human rights activist. The senior Hurriyat Conference leader, Syed Ali Shah Gilani, while accusing the forces of Andrabi's killing, has described the act as brutal and barbarous. [end recording].

Pakistan: Envoy Demands UN Probe Into Death of Kashmiri Activist

BK3003084096 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Pakistan has demanded that the United Nations conduct an enquiry into the inhumane murder of [Kashmir human rights activist] Jalil Andrabi at the hands of Indian occupation troops in occupied Kashmir.

The demand was made by Munir Akram, Pakistan's permanent representative to the United Nations in Geneva, in letters addressed to Jose Ayal Lasso, UN high commissioner for human rights, and (Gilberto Verjini Sahoya), chairman of the UN Commission on Human Rights. He said Andrabi's murder was a deliberate act by Indian forces to punish him for working for the cause of the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination. He said Andrabi was scheduled to leave for Geneva to attend a human rights conference but was kidnapped by India's Rashtriya Rifles and killed in custody.

Pakistan: 'Utterly Savage' Indian Action in Kashmir Assailed

BK3003171796 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1600 GMT 30 Mar 96

[Commentary by A.B.S. Jafri]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] It appears that having despaired of the continuous failure to contain and vanquished the freedom movement in the Kashmir state under their unabashed military occupation, the Indian authorities have decided to declare open war on the people. Within the space of less than a week, the Indian military authorities have unleashed their favorite violence on Muslim places of worship. It is no secret to the world that Kahsmiri Muslims are uncompromisingly dedicated to protect the honor of their religious institutions. The Hazratbal mosque is decidedly the most sacred of places of worship in Kashmir. It is a measure of callousness of Indian occupation authorities that realizing that the people's response would be instant and total retaliation to any disrespect to the mosque, they resort to violence around and often enough inside the Hazratbal mosque.

That is exactly what happened at dawn today when the Indian troops launched an uninhibited attack on the mosque, targeting the sacred place and those inside. Using heavy fire and also mortars, the Indian troops killed more than 20 people. What makes the outrage utterly savage is the indiscriminate attack. The attackers and their officers were well aware that present inside the mosque were women and children and also the

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chief of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front, Shabbir Siddiqui. There is reason to suspect that the Indian military authorities were out to kill Shabbir Siddiqui because he has been the top-ranking person in the hierarchy of the freedom movement in occupied Kahsmir. The authorities simply wanted him out of the way regardless of the price in terms of human lives — that is, Kashmiri lives — and also regardless of what adverse reaction such brutal action and so many fatal casualties would achieve worldwide.

Impartial international news agencies reporting details of this tragedy clearly indicate that the Indian troops mounted the attack at the break of day at a time and from a place which speak of no provocation of any kind. It was obviously a premeditated and well- planned military operation with the clear objective of killing the freedom movement chief, Shabbir Siddiqui.

Today's military operation, targeted on unarmed and defenseless civilian population, including women and children, is no isolated incident. It falls neatly into a pattern of deeply-laid plot to liquidate the top-ranking leadership of the freedom movement in Indian-occupied Kahsmir. Over more than half a decade, the Indian military occupation forces have killed in cold blood several thousand unarmed and peaceful demonstrators, protesters, and the activists of the movement. But instead of the movement showing any signs of wilting under the brutal reign of terror, the struggle has gone from strength to strength. It has not only gained momentum among the Kashmiri people, but is also receiving increasing world attention and approval. Human rights monitors inside India have been voicing criticism, ridicule, and even contempt over the crass mishandling of the Kashmir freedom movement by New Delhi.

The frustrated military occupation authorities has next to nothing to show for all those killed and the enormous cost of the operation, for which the Indian taxpayers have to foot the bill. There appears to be very sinister scheme now under implementation. The idea seems to be to exterminate the top rung of the leadership of the freedom movement. On 8 March, the Indian troops picked up the chief of the occupied Kashmir's human rights organization. He was driving with his wife to his home early in the evening when he was kidnapped. There was no news about him for full 20 days. Then one day — that is, 28 March — the body of the human rights organization chief, Jalil Andrabi, was found floating in the River Jhelum which flows through Srinagar. The body was brought ashore and taken in procession to the nearest Indian Army post. There the funeral processionists were treated to the usual Indian fair of lathi [baton] charge and tear gas. Some were actually detained. Finally, the people of Srinagar gave Jalil Andrabi a hero's farewell and burial befitting their noble leader.

It is natural to link the murder to Jalil Andrabi, who was buried only two days ago, and the killing of Shabbir Siddiqui, who had been the leading light in the Jammu and Kahsmir Liberation Front. The only difference between the liquidation of Jalil Andrabi and the killing of Shabbir Siddiqui is that the first outrage was committed in the secrecy of the military interrogation truncheons. Shabbir Sidduqi was killed in an open but utterly unprovoked predawn onslaught on Kashmir's most sacred shrine and place of worship.

Pakistan: JKLF Chairman Mourns Death of Activists in Srinagar

BK3103083396 Islamabad THE NATION in English 31 Mar 96 p 1

[APP report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — Amanullah Khan, Chairman Jammu Kahsmir Liberation Front (JKLF), has said he did not find proper words that could explain the real nature of Indian savagery in Kahsmir which spoke clearly of India's moral bankruptcy, her being devoid of any regard for justice, morality, decency and civility. He was commenting on Indian armed forces attack on the building that housed the JKLF office in Srinagar and where 21 members of JKLF including its President Shabbir Ahmad Siddiqui were under siege since March 26 and were killed on Saturday morning by the Indian army.

The JKLF Chief said that although the loss was colossal specially when it was preceded by massacre of 11 JKLF Commanders including its Commander-in-Chief Gen Basharat Raza by Indian army at Hazratbal on March 24 but those who thought that was almost the end of JKLF were living in fools paradise. He said JKLF was used to such tragedies and had overcome all of them. He said their leader Maqbool Butt was hanged, two successive commanders-in-chief and dozens of senior commanders were killed by Indian army, on August 6, 1990, eight out of 9 top leaders were arrested but JKLF survived and would survive and overcome the present tragedy and would continue its freedom struggle until India is shunted out of Kashmir defeated, disgraced and humiliated.

Amanullah Khan said that incident should open the eves of those who still supported India and presented her as a civilized and democratic country.

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Pakistan: National Assembly 'Strongly' Condemns Killings in Kashmir

BK3103145396 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 31 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The National Assembly today strongly condemned the latest incident of systematic killing of 22 Kashmiris by the Indian occupation forces in Srinagar yesterday and expressed its solidarity with the valiant people of Jammu and Kashmir who are fighting for survival and their right to self-determination. In a joint resolution by the foreign minister and the deputy leader of opposition, Mr. Gauhar Ayub Khan, the National Assembly unanimously rejected Indian plan to hold so-called elections in occupied Kashmir. It said these will be nothing but farce and added that the just solution lies in the immediate holding of a plebiscite to ascertain the wishes of the Kashmiri people under UN auspices in accordance with the Security Council resolutions.

The resolution urged the Government of Pakistan to take even more strong and effective measures against Indian brutalities, particularly yesterday's killings and that of the murder of human rights activist Jalil Andrabi, at the current session of the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva. The resolution also urged the international community and human rights organizations to take note of these violations and brutalities by Indian forces and pressurize India to stop them.

Earlier, the house offered fateha [prayers] for the shuhda [martyrs] who were martyred by the Indian forces in Srinagar yesterday.

Pakistan: Committee Condemns Indian Killing of Kashmiri Leaders

BK0104053996 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The parliamentary Kashmir committee at its emergency meeting in Islamabad yesterday condemned India and its forces for brutally killing Mr. Jalil Andrabi and Mr. Shabir Ahmed Siddiqui along with other 21 freedom fighters. The committee called upon the international bodies and human rights organizations to urge India to stop the ruthless move to wipe out the freedom movement in occupied Kashmir. The committee resolved that the secretary general of the Organization of Islamic Conference and the Security Council be called upon to take cognizance of the Indian brutalities in the held valley. The opposition leader who attended the meeting assured the committee that they would fully support the effective projection of the Kashmir issue on national and international levels. The members of the opposition on behalf of their parties and other members of the committee also reposed full confidence in Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan's chairmanship and appreciated his services for the Kashmir cause.

Pakistan: Editorial Views Latest Violence Near Kashmir Shrine

BK3103090196 Islamabad THE NATION in English 31 Mar 96 p 6

[Editorial: "A New Plan for Kashmir"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In the early hour on March 30, the Indian Army, which had allowed 17 Kashmiri freedom-fighters to leave Hazratbal shrine unharmed, surrounded their office and virtually butchered them along with the inmates of a neighboring house. The total number of those killed in the so-called armed encounter was 21, including four children and three women. According to the Press report, the troops started lobbing mortars into the office building, destroying it completely and setting on fire the neighboring houses. The Indians claim that the freedom fighters fired back. A spokesman of the group to which these fighters belonged has, however, rejected this version. He said that they did not fire back. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that it was all a pre-planned murder in cold blood of those men. Allowing safe passage to them initially, trapping them in their office and then opening heavy weapons on them before daybreak, all point to a willful deception perpetrated on them. That the fate of the freedom-fighters was sealed from the very start and that they were seeking martyrdom knowingly by allowing themselves to be trapped in a small building, indicates not only their extraordinary courage but also their dedication to the cause of Kashmir's freedom. It only shows that India has already lost the battle for the hearts and minds of the people of Kashmir — a fact that even pro-India visitors to the Valley acknowledge. India is now waging a campaign of brutal suppression to show to the world that a civilian revolt cannot defeat the only 'mini-superpower' of Asia.

The murder in custody of the Kashmiri human rights activist, Andrabi, at the hands of the Indian troops and now the massacre of twenty one freedom-fighters, foreshadows the new policy that India seem to have adopted. Not that it has been less barbaric before, it has in fact, been more so because of its large-scale terror against innocent men, women and children, but the new strategy is aimed at neutralizing the pro-plebiscite activists. Ostensibly to prepare the ground for holding elections of six Kashmiri seats in the Indian Parliament. According to a report of THE HINDUSTAN TIMES, the six and a half lakh troops stationed in Held Kashmir

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have now been asked to launch a 'well-targeted' big offensive to win the 'cooperation' of the Kashmiris for the coming elections. The way the Indian army has interpreted these instructions can already be seen form the tragedies cited earlier, through which well-targeted pro-plebiscite activists have ruthlessly been eliminated. The calculation presumably is that after every single man and woman who subscribed to the UN Security Council Resolutions has been eliminated, those left would be pro-India. How wrong that thesis can be is obvious from the fact that even the staunchest pro-India Kashmiri — Dr. Farooq Abdullah and his party, the National Conference, have decided to boycott the polls. The question then is: who are the people to be targeted by the troops for their 'cooperation'? The answer to that, according to most observers is: the troops themselves. India already has six and half lakh loyal votes in it pocket in the shape of its army there. It is they who would be stuffing the ballot boxes to prove how great is the love of the people of Kashmir for their Indian rulers.

Pakistan: Editorial Views Indian 'Atrocities' in Kashmir

BK3103094096 Rawalpindi NAWA-I-WAQT in Urdu 31 Mar 96 p 6

[Editorial: "Indian Atrocities in Occupied Kashmir — U.S. Condemnation and Pakistan's Responsibility"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Indian troops attacked the holy shrine of Hazratbal on Saturday morning and martyred at least 21 freedom fighters, including Commander Shabbir Siddiqui. Indian troops have besieged the shrine since 24 March. The sanctity of the Hazratbal shrine is beyond any doubt, as the Holy Prophet Muhammad's hair is preserved there. Yet Indian troops have not only desecrated this holy place but have massacred the JKLF (Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front) freedom fighters who took shelter there. Kashmiri Muslims have announced four days of mourning over this incident.

The fresh wave of Indian violence in occupied Kashmir started with the announcement of the election scheduled in May. By suppressing the spirit of jihad among the Kashmiri people, India is trying to establish the false impression among the international community that the situation in Kashmir is under control. This is why it has started blaming Pakistan for sponsoring terrorism in Kashmir. The fact that even the pro-India National Conference has decided to boycott the elections is sufficient to prove the emptiness of India's claim. Even Farooq Abdullah, the puppet Kashmiri leader, has said that conditions in Kashmir are not conducive to elections.

India has failed to hold elections in Kashmir since 1989. At the 1988 SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation] Conference, Rajiv Gandhi boasted that the electoral process was continuing in Kashmir, meaning that the Kashmiri people were satisfied under Indian control. Rajiv Gandhi's claim proved baseless. India has not been able to hold any election in Kashmir even though it has been carrying out genocide against Kashmiris under the pretext of suppressing the freedom movement.

A State Department report has also unveiled Indian atrocities. This report condemns the Indian Government, holding it responsible for kidnappings, rapes, custodial killings, and extreme violence against the Kashmiri people. Assistant Secretary of State Robin Raphel has blamed Indian troops for violence and barbarity in occupied Kashmir. During Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao's visit to the United States, President Bill Clinton also criticized India for human rights violations in Kashmir and asked him to improve the situation.

The fact is that India has deployed more than 600,000 troops in the small valley of Kashmir. The number of troops is one and a half times more than that used by any repressive government to suppress a nationalist struggle. India has beaten all records for cruelty and is following a policy of genocide in Kashmir.

It is feared that India might attack Pakistan and destroy peace in the subcontinent. Pakistan should raise its voice against the Indian atrocities and should lobby the international community to settle the Kashmir dispute. To counter the threat of Indian aggression, we need to forge national unity and harmony as well as acquire a nuclear deterrent.

Pakistan: Bhutto Notes 'Serious Consequences' of Indian Nuclear Test

BK0104050296 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has warned that a second Indian nuclear test would have serious consequences for South Asia. Addressing a dinner hosted in honor of Pakistan Army formation commanders in Islamabad last night, she said that Pakistan's diplomatic efforts have focused in recent months on making the international community realize the implications of India's nuclear program and its highly ambitious projects for the production and deployment of nuclear-capable missiles. She said that, although there is some indication that the world is beginning to see through the Indian smokescreen of pretentious statements, this

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is still not enough to make an adequate impression on India.

Referring to the Kashmir dispute, the prime minister described it as the worst example of Indian intransigence, which has worsened bilateral relations between the two countries. She said thousands of Kashmiris have lost their lives, their villages have been burned, the women have been dishonored, and the entire valley has been subjected to extreme economic hardship. She added that India now plans to hold a sham election in response to growing international condemnation.

The prime minister said India has organized a gang of criminals that is terrorizing the Kashmiri people, including their representatives in the All Parties Hurriyat Conference [APHC]. The latest victims of Indian atrocities are martyrs Andrabi and Shabir Ahmed and 20 others, who were killed on 30 March when Indian forces blasted a house near the Hazratbal shrine in Srinagar where they had taken refuge. The prime minister said that India is, in fact, destroying the chance for peaceful negotiations by trying to destroy the APHC. India's initiation of talks with a few puppets is a ploy to deflect world attention. It has never worked in the past, and it will not work in case of Kashmir.

The prime minister stated categorically that the option of abandoning the people of Kashmir does not exist for Pakistan. She said the Kashmiri people have as much right to self-determination as the people of India and Pakistan. They have demonstrated with their blood and tears that, given the opportunity, they would have acceded to Pakistan at any time during the last half a century.

Expressing concern over the situation in Afghanistan, the prime minister said the crisis in that country is due to President Rabbani's failure to honor his commitment to Afghan leaders. She said that Afghanistan needs a broad-based national reconciliation government representing all ethnic and regional interests. She also pointed out that India is exploiting the weakness of the Kabul regime, which only controls five provinces. Indian intrusion into the affairs of the Afghan people is nothing short of an insult to them because India supported the ruthless aggression against Afghanistan for more than a decade. The prime minister pointed out that, in consultation with other neighboring states, we have emphasized the need for controls over factors such as the flow of weapons into Afghanistan in the hope that this would eventually lead to peace and stability.

Reflecting on Pakistan-U.S. relations, the prime minister said the changing situation in the West and in Central Asia has reminded Washington once again of Pakistan's strategic importance. This can provide the basis of significant cooperation in the future. She stressed a continuous dialogue with Washington and expressed satisfaction that the United States now admits that Kashmir is a primary source of tension in South Asia and that a collective approach is needed in South Asia for the solution of contentious issues and to achieve the goal of nonproliferation.

Referring to domestic issues, the prime minister said that the realization of comprehensive economic stability is the government's first priority. She said that a recent World Bank analysis of Pakistan's prospects through 2010 has said that Pakistan can achieve an increase in gross domestic product of 5.6 percent annually, and this would be a miracle for South Asia. She said that we do not support achieving cheap publicity on the issue of national development. She said that we will make the country's security and defenses impregnable, even if it makes us unpopular. We will protect the lives and properties of the people and ensure political stability, economic prosperity, and social freedom.

The prime minister said that Pakistan is not alone today at the international level. We are a responsible nation, and we are playing our role in the world with great responsibility. She said that we are at the forefront in the war to eliminate terrorism and the narcotics menace, and our gallant forces have sacrificed their lives to protect peace in the world through UN peacekeeping efforts. The Pakistani stand — that it cannot take any unilateral step on the nuclear issue and it will work on the regional or multilateral level to check the proliferation of nuclear weapons — has been accepted.

Addressing the commanders, the prime minister said that they are the custodians and protectors of Pakistan's territorial integrity; they are the brave soldiers of Islam who do not rely on hollow slogans and who always remain ready to offer the sacrifice of their lives for the prestige and dignity of the country. She said that the Pakistani nation is fully aware of this fact and is proud of its Armed Forces.

Pakistan: Bhutto Admits 'Some Difficult Issues' Need To Be Addressed

BK0104085896 Islamabad THE NATION in English 1 Apr 96 pp 1, 4

[APP report]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Islamabad — Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto on Sunday warned that the Indian second nuclear test would have tragic consequences for the subcontinent.

Addressing a dinner hosted in honor of the Formation Commanders of the Pakistan Army here at the

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Prime Minister's House on Sunday, she said, "in recent months, our diplomatic efforts have focused on making the international community realize the implications of the Indian nuclear program and its highly ambitious projects for the production and deployment of nuclear-capable missiles." [passage omitted]

She admitted that there were some difficult issues that need to be addressed such as U.S. fears concerning Pakistan's nuclear program; missile capability, stance concerning the CTBT [Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty] which we maintain we will only sign when India does; the complex issues that will have to be addressed when discussion on the Fissile Material Cut Off Treaty start in earnest to ensure that it is equitable and non discriminatory so that no country will retain a permanent advantage; the return of our moneys paid for the F-16's which has been conceded in principle; the latest move by Senate opponents of the Brown Amendment to prevent the delivery of our equipment.

"All these will require a continuous dialogue with Washington for which happily now a framework exists as a result of our visit to Washington exactly a year ago. The leadership of the United States now admits that Kashmir is a primary source of tension in South Asia and that a collective approach was needed in South Asia for the solution of contentious issues as well as towards non proliferation. Our commitment to global and regional security is fully appreciated."

The prime minister describing security as a total concept, said, achievement of macro-economic stability is government's highest priority and the peoples government after examining the development of Korea, Thailand has come to the conclusion that the development of a sound democratic structure was important.

However, she said, in recent World Bank study on Pakistan's prospects in the year 2010 conclude that Pakistan can realize a high case scenario and raise its savings and investment rates and achieve a measurable improvement in its key social indicators.

It estimates that if the GDP growth rate averages about 6.5 per cent a year during 1990's and can accelerate to about 8 per cent in the latter part of the period, Pakistan will become a South Asian miracle.

"These targets require courageous monetary and fiscal policies and we have the courage to take them. Leadership is not about cheap popularity at the cost of national growth. Leadership is about the boldness to take tough decisions which are right, even if they are unpopular, to ensure the security and defense of the State, the protection of the lives of the citizens political stability, economic growth and social emancipation."

Premier Bhutto said, today Pakistan is not internationally isolated. We are a responsible nation playing a responsible role on the world stage.

"We are in the forefront combating terrorism, narcotics smuggling and our brave men have shed their blood to preserve peace in the world through UN peace keeping efforts.

"Our stand that Pakistan cannot take unilateral measures in the nuclear field but will work regionally or multilaterally on proliferation issue has been accepted."

"The passage of the Brown Amendment despite India's desperate efforts, was a moral vindication of Pakistan and led to a new opening in its relations with the U.S.

"The Casablanca Conference adopting a unanimous resolution on Kashmir and its settlement under UN Security Council resolutions was a historic moment.

"The gradual return of peace to Karachi has given confidence to all citizens and welcomed by the Nation.

"Devolution is the key note of our development program. District level Social Action Boards decide where to build schools, water supply, etc. according to a criteria.

"Foreign exchange reserves are up from $300 million to $1.5 billion.

"The Budget Deficit has been reduced by 40 per cent in less than 3 years. The current account deficit has been reduced by nearly 50 per cent from 7.14 per cent to 3.97 per cent of GDP. $200 million of our most expensive domestic debt has been paid off.

"These are no mean achievements."

The prime minister addressing the commanders said, "You are the custodians of Pakistan's territorial integrity, the defenders of our frontiers. You have dedicated your lives to this noble objective. You are also the silent soldiers of Islam who do not raise empty slogans but quietly serve it with readiness to make the supreme sacrifice of your lives for its glory.

"The Pakistani nation realizes this fact and cherishes your idealism. We are proud of our Armed Forces. We are proud of the courage, devotion, discipline demonstrated by our Armed Forces from the icy heights of Siachin to the deserts of Sindh."

Pakistan: Ali—Country Cannot Ignore Threat of Indian Nuclear Program

BK0104083196 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Overseas Service in English 0800 GMT 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The foreign minister, Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali, has said that although Pakistan is de-

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termined to use its technological abilities in the nuclear field for peaceful purposes, it cannot be unmindful of threats posed to its security by the Indian nuclear program. This he stated in a written reply to a question by Maulana Abdul Rahim in National Assembly today.

The foreign minister said India is actively pursuing its nuclear ambitions as is evident from its preparations for a second nuclear test and development of ballistic missiles. India has also adopted a negative attitude toward the negotiations for a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. He said Pakistan is committed to the goal of nuclear nonproliferation and has earnestly sought to realize this objective, both at the global and regional levels. He said: Unfortunately, efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear and ballistic missiles in South Asia continue to be impeded by India, which has opposed all initiatives which Pakistan has taken in this regard.

The foreign minister said Pakistan believes that nuclear technology should be used for peaceful purposes. Its application in agriculture, medicine, and energy sectors is essential for a developing country like Pakistan.

To another question by Rana Zahid Tausif, the foreign minister said Pakistan is ready for third party mediation on Jammu and Kashmir dispute provided such an effort can help in resolving the dispute according to relevant UN resolutions. He, however, pointed out that India has rejected all offers of such mediation.

Pakistan: Defendants in Egyptian Embassy Bombing Reportedly Released

NC0104132096 Cairo AL-MUSAWWAR in Arabic 29 Mar 96 p 8

[FBIS Translated Text] Sources in the Pakistani Interior Ministry have stated that it has released all the Arab suspects who had been detained for interrogation in the bombing of the Egyptian Embassy in Islamabad. The same sources added that the Arabs were released even though it was proven that a number of them had purchased the car that was used in the bombing, which could lead to identifying the planners and perpetrators of the operation.

The released Arabs said that the Pakistani Government had asked each of them for 15,000 rupees security against their release. The sources said that the Canadian Government had interceded with the Pakistani Government to release Ahmad Sayyid Qadir, a Canadian citizen of Egyptian descent.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: President Views Strategy To End Ethnic Crisis

BK2903121796 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 29 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Chandrika Kumaratunga says that her government has done more for its economy than any of its predecessors. She told India's HINDU newspaper that her strategy on the ethnic crisis, which combines a military approach with the emphasis on a political solution, has succeeded to a certain extent.

In an interview published on Wednesday [27 March], president maintained that the Tamils living in unliberated areas have expressed interest in the government's devolutio,. proposals. She urged the democratic Tamil leadership to provide these people with a voice in the devolution debate.

Mrs. Kumaratunga said that the government was preparing the Sinhala masses for the devolution package. Tamil leaders should do the same for their community and stressed that the LTTE's [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] murderous politics was not the only solution to the ethnic problem. The president observed that, while the UNP [United National Party] had not openly opposed the devolution proposals, its attitude had hitherto been very negative. She observed that the opposition should propose amendments to the devolution package so that it could take part of the credit for settling the ethnic crisis.

Sri Lanka: Defease Official Outlines Campaign Against LTTE

BK2903024796 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 29 Mar 96

[Article by Kamani Alwis — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The government has launched a meticulously planned and effective campaign to reveal the true face of the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] and present the correct facts regarding the situation in Sri Lanka to the world, Deputy Defence Minister General Anuruddha Ratwatte told the DAILY NEWS yesterday.

The LTTE, facing great difficulties in the face of military successes and widespread international condemnation of its activities, is now engaged in a vicious propaganda campaign against Sri Lanka.

The main thrust of their campaign is reported to be that the "Sri Lankan Government is waging a war against the

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Tamil people." The LTTE has been organising rallies and seminars and distributing audiolideo cassettes to spread false propaganda in various parts of the world.

According to reports reaching Colombo, the campaign has proved futile although the LTTE has sought to cultivate an image as an innocent organisation trying to "save the Tamil people" from the security forces. The LTTE's blood-splattered record of atrocities and bombings has convinced the international community of its true nature.

"The international community will not be deceived by the propaganda tactics of the LTTE and its attempts at tarnishing Sri Lanka's image will not be successful," General Ratwatte said.

He said that no country would help the LTTE in its sinister manoeuvres. However, the LTTE obtains funds at individual level from its members living abroad - and from other expatriate Tamils through extortion.

Sri Lanka: Minister Says Government Not To Change Peace Plan

BK2903121896 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 29 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Deputy Defense Minister General Anuruddha Ratwatte has stressed that the government has no intention of changing or reviewing its plan for peace. Anti-terrorist operations are already under way in the East; terrorism will soon be eradicated. The minister said that the president's promise of peace would be then realized.

Gen. Ratwatte was speaking at a ceremony organized to accept contributions to the National Defense Fund at the Defense Ministry yesterday. He observed that the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam], which is under severe military pressure in the North and East, is now trying to destabilize the South. The Tigers are resorting to brutal massacre of innocent civilians and the wanton destruction of public property. They were also stepping up their false propaganda campaign to discredit the government in the eyes of international community. Minister Ratwatte pointed out, however, that the world would not fall prey to the ploys of the terrorists. The government's efforts to liberate the Tamil people from the LTTE have been met with international acclaim. The minister also pledged that contributions to the National Defense Fund will be used for the welfare of security forces personnel at the battle front.

Sri Lanka: LTTE Dispatch Claims Government Preparing Offensive

BK0104112996 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in Tamil 30 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A large number of troops are being consolidated and a large quantity of arms amassed in the north. Observers think there will be a heavy offensive following the announcement by Deputy Defense Minister Anuruddha Ratwatte that a solution will be found to the ethnic conflict by the end of next month. They have also stated that the military operation, which is creating more and more difficulties for the Tamil people, will complicate the situation to the extent that it will be impossible to reach a peaceful settlement.

Two Sri Lankan policemen were killed in an offensive by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] at Sittandi, Batticaloa District. These two policemen were killed in an LTTE attack on a police checkpost on Pattiruppu Bridge early yesterday morning.

Major Kalaivanan was martyred in an accidental blast in Jaffna District the day before yesterday. Valiant Tiger Deepan embraced martyrdom in another accidental blast in Vadamarachchi. Our tributes go to these national heroes who completely dedicated themselves to the holy war to rout the enemy from our motherland.

A Muslim home guard was caught red-handed by passengers while planting a bomb on a bus bound for Mandur from Kalmunai. Except for a few commandos, the bus was packed with Tamil passengers. As the bus stopped at Chenaikudiyiruppu, the home guard boarded the bus carrying a bundle with a bomb. He was arrested by the commandos when an old woman raised the alarm as he disembarked from the bus without the bundle.

A member of the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization was shot dead in Batticaloa yesterday. This incident took place at Valaichchenai at around 1730 yesterday.

Troops deployed in Vavuniya have brought 50 new buses from Colombo to Vavuniya. It is still a mystery as to why the troops brought the buses to Vavuniya.

Anuruddha Ratwatte, Sri Lanka's deputy defense minister, has stated that a well-planned and orchestrated campaign has been launched in the West to thwart the antigovernment propaganda carried out by the LTTE and to highlight the real situation to the Western world. Meanwhile, he has also stated that the Western world does not give credibility to the LTTE propaganda.

Meanwhile, available reports say that under a joint effort by Sri Lanka and India, Tamil groups from Colombo have been appointed to carry out anti-Tamil Eelam propaganda through their contacts abroad. It is

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understood that their task is to carry out a campaign favoring the stance of the Sri Lankan and Indian Governments against the Tamil Eelam freedom struggle, to support the Sinhalese government in its genocide of Tamils, and to carry out an overt or covert campaign against the LTTE in Western countries. It is also understood that the Indian and Sri Lankan Governments are prepared to spend a substantial sum of money on this, as they believe that such campaigns carried out by Tamil groups can convince the West more easily (?than) their own direct campaigns.

The Tigers' aspiration is for the Tamil Eelam motherland! Thanks.

Sri Lanka: President Stresses Political Solution to Ethnic Problem

BK3103133496 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 31 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Chandrika Kumaratunga has called on the Tamil community and its leaders to make a firm decision on the need for a political solution to their problems. The majority community has accepted this fact. There is consensus that the ethnic problem can be resolved through a process of devolution.

The president was speaking at a ceremony organized to honor battlefront heroes at the Sugathdasa Stadium in Colombo yesterday. The ceremony had been organized by the (Sudhanellu) Movement. Mrs. Kumaratunga observed that the government had proposed a political solution for the problems of the Tamil people. Therefore, there is no need to continue with militant movement to resolve this issue. A peaceful solution can be achieved through consensus and compromise.

The president pointed out that the government had faced serious challenges when it launched the peace process. She said that her administration had approached the ethnic problem from a totally different position to that of the previous regime. President Kumaratunga observed that the Sinhala and Muslim communities are now approaching the problems of the Tamils with an open mind. She attributed this remarkable change in thinking to various programs implemented by her administration. The (Sudhanellu) Movement had played a critical role in affecting this change. The president said that the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] had resorted to various tactics to provoke the Sinhala people during the last few months. These brutal tactics, however, had failed miserably.

Mrs. Kumaratunga accused the UNP [United National Party] of shortsighted policies which escalated the war in the north and the east. She said that the previous regime had no military strategy. Armed forces chiefs were not consulted. Those who spoke out were either transferred or assassinated. The present government, however, has a definite plan to end the war in the north. The security forces have launched operations in keeping with this plan. These efforts have already begun to bear fruit. President Kumaratunga stressed, however, that the war was not against the Tamil people. It is intended only to wipe out terrorism.

In a special message to mark the occasion, Prime Minister Sirima Bandaranaike commended the (Sudhanellu) Movement for its efforts to resolve the ethnic problem. She pointed out dangers of allowing the crisis to drag on. The prime minister stressed that it was the responsibility of the people to provide for the families of armed forces personnel.

Convener of the (Sudhanellu) Movement Minister Mangala Samaraweera delivered his [word indistinct] welcome address. He described some of the measures that had been taken to improve the lot of the families of servicemen who were killed or wounded in action. Deputy Defense Minister General Anuruddha Ratwatte delivered the vote of thanks. He pledged that peace would be restored once terrorism had been eradicated.

The president then launched a special program to provide assistance to war victims and the families of fallen or disabled servicemen. Disabled security forces personnel will also be provided for under this program. A title deed for a plot of land was handed over to Sergeant W.L. Upali, who survived the [word indistinct] Point bomb explosion. Several donations were made to people affected by the conflict. Scholarships were awarded to the children of war heroes.

Ministers, MP's, the three service commanders, and the IGP [Inspector General of Police] were present.

Sri Lanka: LTTE Dispatch Reports Offensive in Batticaloa

BK2803130296 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in Tamil 24 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Headquarters has released details about the offensive carried out yesterday in the Batticaloa District. A military contingent proceeding to Vantarumulai from the Murakkoddanchenai camp was intercepted and attacked by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] at 1350 yesterday. The contingent comprising more than 100 soldiers came under a fierce LTTE attack. More than 40 soldiers were killed on the spot in the offensive that lasted about 40 minutes. Others managed to escape with injuries. The LTTE seized

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a large quantity of arms. This offensive was carried out to commemorate the death of 11 freedom fighters who were martyred during the attack on the Kinnaiyadi military camp in Batticaloa on 22 March. Three freedom fighters from the LTTE side were martyred in this successful offensive: Major Ravan, Lieutenant Ilakkian, and Second Lieutenant Murali.

It should be noted that a Sri Lankan security forces officer, while releasing details about yesterday's offensive, said that the Air Force chased and shot at the LTTE cadres who launched the offensive and that about 50 Tigers were understood to have been killed. It should also be noted that several international news agencies have begun viewing reports issued by the Chandrika Kumaratunga government with suspicion; it is indulging in the dissemination of totally false propaganda to hoodwink the Sinhalese people and the world at large. As the Tigers were carrying out the offensive at Mavadivembu, another LTTE contingent simultaneously launched missile attacks on the Murakkoddanchenai and Kiran military camps. There are no reports on the military's losses. Meanwhile, valiant Tiger Chankilian embraced martyrdom during the direct confrontation in the area of Kolumbuthurai in Jaffna District. Our tributes go to the valiant Tigers who sacrificed their dear lives in the holy war to drive the enemies from our motherland.

Two policemen were killed in another attack launched against Sri Lankan police in Batticaloa around 0900 yesterday morning. Policemen from the Chinnavattuvan police station who were proceeding to the Mavadi police station were attacked. After seizing two weapons in the surprise attack, the Tigers returned to their base without suffering any losses. [passage omitted]

The Tigers' aspiration: Motherland of Tamil Eelam!

Sri Lanka: LTTE Dispatch Reports Offensive in Trincomalee

BK3003122596 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in Tamil 25 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] have launched an offensive on Sri Lankan troops in Trincomalee District today. More than 15 soldiers were killed in the offensive, which lasted only 15 minutes. A number of weapons were seized by the LTTE. This is the second worst setback suffered by the Sri Lankan troops in the east within the past 48 hours. It may be recalled that 41 soldiers, including an officer, were killed on the spot in the offensive carried out in Sittandi in the Batticaloa District the day before yesterday. In these two attacks, the Sri Lankan military suffered more than 56 casualties and lost a large quantity of arms to the LTTE. Today's attack was carried out to commemorate the 31st day of the martyrdom of four freedom fighters, including Major Moorthy, in the offensive carried out in Thirumalai District on 23 February. The soldiers attached to the Pulmoddai-Malaichandi military camp proceeding to Alayadi camp at the 14th milestone on a route-clearing and patrol mission were intercepted and attacked within a few meters of the police station at the 13th milestone at 0940 this morning. In his report about the offensive, BBC's Colombo correspondent George Arney said: a major portion of the patrol contingent was completely wiped out. He has also reported that a few lucky ones managed to escape with injuries. Citing deputy defense minister Anuruddha Ratwatte as saying that he would bring the war to an end before the Tamil and Sinhalese new year, George Arney has also pointed out that there are only three weeks to the new year. It is to be noted that the LTTE did not suffer any losses in today's successful ambush.

A Sri Lankan police contingent on patrol duty in Kalmunai came under LTTE's attack. There is no report on any casualties.

An LTTE commando unit also attacked the Sri Lankan Task Force contingent in Akkaraippattu the day before yesterday. There is no report on any casualties.

Two innocent civilians were killed in a shooting by Sri Lankan troops on Chenkaladi-Badulla road on 21 March. One of the victims was identified as 40-year old Vairamuthu Santhalingam.

Fifty-one Tamil prisoners detained in Kalutara prison have resorted to a hunger strike. These prisoners, who have been under detention for the past five years, are demanding either their trials or release. It has been stated that if a solution to their problems is not found, 274 other Tamil youths under detention in Kalutara prison will join the hunger strike.

A Muslim civilian was killed and several others injured when a Sri Lankan Air Force helicopter resorted to shooting in Batticaloa last Saturday. This shooting incident took place at Mavadivembu locality when the people were returning in a Sri Lanka Transport Corporation bus after attending a Muslim conference in Puttalam.

Sri Lankan troops have been imposing a curfew in the military controlled Weligama locality. It is reported that announcements for the enforcement of the curfew are being made all of a sudden. The troops, who send out people from the areas under curfew, allow them to stay in those localities once the curfew is lifted. The Sri Lankan troops are creating problems and imposing

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restrictions on a small number of people who are in the clutches of the military.

The Sri Lankan Navy resorted to a heavy artillery barrage on the high seas off Pooneryn early yesterday morning. Following this, fishermen carrying out fishing operations in the area hastily returned to the shore.

The Tigers' aspiration: the Motherland of Tamil Eelam!

Sri Lanka: Tigers Attack Navy Convoy; 'At Least' 54 Killed

BK3103075296 Hong Kong AFP in English 0718 GMT 31 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Colombo, March 31 (AFP) — Tamil Tiger rebels staged a seaborne suicide raid and attacked a military base in eastern Sri Lanka, raising the death toll on both sides to at least 54 as the army geared for a major offensive, officials said Sunday.

The separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) rammed an explosive laden boat against an Israeli-built Dvora gunboat escorting a naval convoy off the northern town of Vettilaikerni on Saturday, military spokesman Sarath Munasinghe said.

He said 10 sailors, including two officers, were killed when the LTTE used a flotilla of eight boats, fitted with powerful outboard motors, to mount the surprise assault against the convoy taking supplies to the Jaffna peninsula.

A military statement here Sunday said that Mi-24 helicopter gunships and Puccara ground attack aircraft went to the rescue of the beleaguered navy convoy on Saturday, sinking eight rebel boats, and claimed killing 35 Tigers.

And in the island's east, the LTTE attacked two military posts in the district of Batticaloa Sunday, killing three soldiers and six civilians, officials in Batticaloa, 303 kilometres (189 miles) east of here said by telephone.

Defence analysts said Saturday's attack was a setback to government plans to mount a fresh offensive against the LTTE in the Jaffna peninsula in a bid to wrest control over the entire area before the Sinhala and Tamil New Year on April 13 and 14.

"All arrangements are in place to start the offensive. It can begin even tomorrow if the government so wishes," a defence source said, adding that the Tigers had escalated their attacks to blunt the onslaught.

But the LTTE said that the army was trying to mount a big campaign in the Thenamarchchi and Vadamarachchi sectors of the Jaffna peninsula and ordered Tamil civilians to leave the region.

Travellers from the north said the LTTE was offering free transport to civilians to leave the peninsula and move to areas of the island's northern mainland still under rebel control.

"Tigers are also dismantling some of their offices in those areas and bringing them down to Kilinochchi (just south of the Jaffna peninsula)," a traveller said Saturday.

The Tigers shot dead 55 soldiers in two separate attacks against security forces in the eastern region last week.

The LTTE's clandestine radio, the Voice of Tigers, Sunday claimed that they completely destroyed one gunboat and said casualty figures will be released later.

Defence analysts said the Tiger attack fitted into a larger plan by the guerrillas to cut off the supply lines to thousands of soldiers in the Jaffna peninsula. Rebels have blocked all land routes to the region.

Troops inside the peninsula depend largely on the navy for the transport of reinforcements, heavy military hardware and dry rations, while the minuscule airforce ferries fresh food and small numbers of troops to the battle zone.

"Tigers know if they can cripple the navy they can cause more damage to the army," a defence analyst said. "For them, it is better and more effective to take on a weaker navy than confront the soldiers on the ground."

Tigers blasted a supply craft of the navy on October 17, on the eve of the army's biggest ever ground offensive in Jaffna that lasted nearly 50 days and claimed the lives of 500 soldiers and an estimated 2,500 rebels.

The Tamil Tigers' success against the navy is attributed to an elite suicide unit called the Black Sea Tigers.

The Sea Tigers find their roots at a village in the northern Jaffna peninsula called Velvedditurai, once regarded as the capital of smuggling in Sri Lanka and also the birth place of Tiger supremo Velupillai Prabhakaran.

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